

UNITED STATES ARMY
SENIOR NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICER ORAL HISTORY
PROGRAM

INTERVIEW WITH CSM (RETIRED) SCOTT C. SCHROEDER

Charlotte, North Carolina

November 27, 2017

Interviewer: SERGEANT MAJOR D. BRETT WATERHOUSE

Interviewee: COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR (RETIRED) SCOTT C.
SCHROEDER

* * * * *

ANDERSON COURT REPORTING
706 Duke Street, Suite 100
Alexandria, VA 22314
Phone (703) 519-7180 Fax (703) 519-7190

I N T E R V I E W

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Good afternoon. My name is Sergeant Major Brett Waterhouse of the United States Army Heritage and Education Center, and today I'm interviewing Command Sergeant Major-Retired Scott C. Schroeder [CSM(R)] for the Senior Non-Commissioned Officer Oral History Program.

Today's date is November 27, 2017, and this interview is being conducted in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Sergeant Major, can you please tell me your date of birth and where you were born?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I was born on the 12th of January 1961, in York, Pennsylvania.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Would you please talk a little bit about your childhood, to include your family life, places you've lived, your hobbies, interests, up through your high school years?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Okay. Like I said, I was born in York, Pennsylvania, but my dad had

recently retired from the Navy and I was working with the space program, and we moved around quite a bit, so we moved from Pennsylvania to Bermuda. Lived in Bermuda a couple years and then Maryland, Florida. I lived in Mexico where I went to the second and third grade. Back to Pennsylvania, Florida, and then my dad left the space program and he moved to Virginia, and I was in middle school, high school years in Virginia. So, I graduated from high school at King George, Virginia, which is near Fredericksburg. I moved around quite a bit. When we finally moved to Virginia, we lived really out in the country. Spent a lot of time outdoors, playing sports and working around the house, so that's kind of me at the house. Didn't really necessarily have a great home life. It was okay. I mean, there's a lot of people that had a lot worse off than I did, but it wasn't great. I didn't do well in school really. I was pretty good with math and science. I didn't read really well.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: I'm the opposite.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Say again?

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: I'm the opposite. (Laughter)

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I was not really a huge reader until after I joined the Army and had been in the Army for a while. I considered myself shy. Other than sports, I kind of lacked confidence and was shy. When I played sports I really did well and I thrived. That was in high school. So, I really had no direction. I thought I wanted to go to school, but didn't have a course of study or interest when I was in high school and leaving high school, but I did get through high school. And it only took me four years.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: That's good. Any other interesting facts, Sergeant Major, concerning your, some people call it formative years, before you graduated?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I don't know about formative years before I graduated from high school. I think after I left high school, not knowing what I wanted to do, I went and I tried my hand at some

school and I did some working. I think that really -- I didn't know what I wanted to study, so that kind of makes school a little bit challenging. My dad tried to talk me into the science side of things because he was into science and technology, and that's not necessarily where I wanted to go, but I still went and did some of those things. I worked at a convenience store for a while, and I learned a lot there, and I worked in a lumberyard. And the guy that ran the lumberyard had raced cars. He was very mechanically inclined. I learned a lot about hard work. I learned a lot about people that work hard in life and about people who work hard and don't have a lot in life. And like Winfield (inaudible). He was one of the guys I worked with. He was an old guy, 50 years old, strong as an ox and these guys worked really hard. They didn't make a lot of money and they didn't have a lot, and I decided this is not what I want to do with my life. So, at the age of 22, which is late for -- some people would consider it late but, I joined the Army, and because I wasn't sure what I wanted to do,

but I was going to look somewhere else.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Okay. So, you joined the Army in May of 1983. Why did you choose the Army instead of one of the other branches?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Well, to be totally honest, a year prior to joining the Army, I had looked into the Navy and I through to the Navy recruiting process, and I did everything the Navy recruiter told me to do. I went down to the MEPS [Military Entrance Processing Station] and he said, bring your medical records, and so I brought my medical records, and the week before I had completed the Marine Corps marathon, so on Sunday, and I think Monday or Tuesday, I went down to the MEPS station for my physical. I went down there and, so I had all my stuff from growing up in the Navy, my medical records and some medical stuff that had been treated when I was a kid, and I got rejected from military service.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Wow. So, how did that change later for the Army?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Well, I just lied.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: (Laughter)

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: When they ask if you've ever been rejected from military service, I figured there's got to be a statute of limitations, so, I should be okay by now. But then they rejected me because I wasn't physically capable of serving in the military.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Well, they were wrong, I guess.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: So, I think I'm okay.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, when you did go and join the Army, in MEPS you decided to enlist as a 94-Uniform --

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Actually, it was 24-Uniform.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: 24-Uniform. Sorry. Nike Hercules Missile Custodian?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Well, it was an electronics mechanic.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: So, 24-Uniform Nike Herc

[Hercules] Electronics Mechanic. Still kind of going on the side of technology and what my dad thought. I didn't consult with him when I went and joined. I kind of came back and said, hey, I joined the Army. But, I still leaned in that same, maybe work on a trade, have a trade when you get out, learn some stuff. And, really, I did learn some stuff, but it was solid state electronics. When we're getting ready to go, I mean, that's kind of old technology. Not that I understood, but I signed the line that said, hey, I understand that I'd be eligible for a bonus if I went to the infantry or took other MOSs [Military Occupational Specialties], but, no, I said, hey, I want this. I want this school. I want this school that's like 54 weeks long.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, you used the influence your dad had to have some kind of trade when you get out.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yes. That's why I did it. I don't regret it. I learned a lot doing that, but I certainly wasn't thinking of making the Army a

career. I was going to do my four years. I was going to learn some stuff, I was going to save some money, and then try to figure out what I wanted to do and possibly go back to college.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Sergeant Major, you attended basic training and advanced individual training, which I'll say BCT or AIT from here on out, at Fort Bliss, Texas. What was your rank at the time and what was your experience like there?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I think I was a PV1. I think I was a PV1, or I may have been a PV2, because I had a few college credits when I joined. So, I may have come in as a PV2. It was at Fort Bliss. I flew in there at night, so it was dark and you couldn't see anything and they had a representative there until you get on the bus, ride the bus to -- I forget the name of the place, but where you go to the reception station, and went over there. It was absolutely dark and didn't see anything but desert, and then the sun came up and you saw nothing but desert, open area and the mountains. And, so that's where I was. That's

how it started, but then I was surprised how really it was easy for me. The basic training was easy for me. It seemed like it was difficult for others because others had not been exposed to a disciplined lifestyle. And I was relatively fit. And I did not find it that hard. I really enjoyed hands-on learning. I enjoyed that aspect of it and I think in many cases that's why young soldiers like the harmony in the military because they like hands-on learning rather than lectures.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, the training itself for Advanced Individual Training, or AIT, was that challenging, or was that fairly easy for you as well?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Talking about the technical aspect?

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: The technical stuff, yes.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: No, it was more tedious. It wasn't really that challenging. It was basic electronics. There were several systems and you had

to be able to troubleshoot and be able to go through and troubleshoot systems and isolate problems and then replace components, but, it wasn't that difficult. Once you had the basic understanding, it was not that hard.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: How long was your AIT?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Altogether it was about 50 weeks.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Altogether?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yes.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: After you graduated, you were assigned overseas to Germany. I know you can't go into detail, but what unit were you assigned to and what did you do over there?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I was with the 52nd United States Army Air Defense Command. I was in a team. Those were broken down as teams, they had A, B, C, D teams. Initially I was in Delta team, which was at Marienheide and then that team closed down and then I moved to Oedingen. In each one of these, where you

got the custodian portion, that's truly what it was after I got there, because the Germans had had this Nike Herc [Hercules] system for years, and the only reason we were there is because they were nuclear capable weapons delivery systems. That's kind of what we did. We were 12 -- we were about 20 -- about 18 to 20 Americans on a German Air Force Base really where they had these missiles that were set up and we just did maintenance on those and maintained security on those missiles. We had an infantry component as well as a maintenance component, and then we had the administration, but it was only 18 to 20 Americans.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Was that the first time you've worked with international folks?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Well, yeah, other than like the second and third grade.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: And being in Mexico. (Laughter)

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah. (Laughter)

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: You were the international folk.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah. It was really small, so it was really interesting because we did not have a large kaserne to go larger kaserne or the military bases where they had the large American contingent was about an hour-and-a-half to two-and-a-half-hour drive, so we were the only Americans within an hour and a half.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Did you learn the German language at all there?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I was able to speak German pretty well, and I ended up moving out and living on the economy because they only had so much barracks space. And I extended a year in Germany just because I enjoyed it there so much. Then it was time for me to reenlist. I did enjoy Germany.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: This is kind of a general question of that time in the Army or in America, that era. In that first unit in basic and AIT, how do you feel the quality of the average soldier, your peers back then, and the NCO quote was back then? How did you see them?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I was a private, so really I didn't know. And the type of job I was in, it's totally different than what I went to afterwards. So, I would say, I think we're better today than we ever have been. I think the Army today is better off than it ever has been. But, that's not to say that -- we had great leaders in the Army at that time, and I learned a lot. Everything that I did in the Army over the course of 34 years shaped me either in a positive way or negative way. I know I was a young, immature private, and I did some stupid stuff. We did stupid stuff. Guess what? Today we have young, immature privates and some soldiers, and they do some stupid stuff. And it's okay. That's part of growing up. And I had leaders that invested in me. When it was time for me to reenlist, I had to go down and see the company commander for two things, and one was my reenlistment counseling and the other one was reading of an Article 15.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Okay.

(Laughter)

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: It was about an hour away. So, it was an hour away to get to where the company commander was.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: What was your rank at the time?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I was an E4P, E4 Promotable.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: E4 Promotable. Okay.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: So, I was an E4 Promotable, and it's time for me to reenlist. Like I said, you had to go an hour-and-a-half to two-and-a-half hours on the back of a truck to go to the major concern. So I just bought a car. And so, I bought a car and I needed to get it registered, but it was a two-and-a-half-hour drive in the cold on the back of a 5-ton truck in February in Germany down the autobahn. I thought my time was better suited at work, doing work for the unit and stuff and Specialist Riles was PCSing [Permanent Change of Stationing]. So, Riles happened to put his license plates in the dumpster and

I thought, huh, karma, here they are. (Laughter) This is exactly what I've been waiting for. I needed these license plates. And so, I slapped them on my car. And they worked for a little while until the German Polizei took a picture of my car driving down the road and somehow they figured out it was me.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: That's why you had to see the commander.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I had to go see the commander for driving an unregistered, uninsured vehicle with stolen plates on it.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: How did that turn out?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: So, I went in and talked to him and he asked me what I was doing as far as reenlistment goes, and I said, well, sir, I'm not so sure. It's probably dependent on our next meeting. I'm a promotable specialist right now and I'm really considering reenlistment, but if I walk out of our next meeting as a PV2, I'm probably just going to thank the Army and move on. It's nobody's fault but

mine. So, what I'd really like to do is, I'd like to reenlist for the infantry. Then he had me back in his office for the next one and he gave me a verbal admonishment. That was my punishment.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, basically a second chance.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Oh, he gave me the change of a lifetime.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Just starting out, yes.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: So, that's one of the lessons I took with me for the rest of my career. Don't put people in a position where they can't recover. And UCMJ [Uniform Code of Military Justice] should be fair and unequal. And I would also tell young leaders and old leaders, don't give your authority away. I took that with me and I would consider it an offense if I had to ask somebody to discipline one of my soldiers because I didn't have the ability to do it. Now, in some cases, you have to because commanders retain the right to adjudicate

certain levels and types of misconduct. But, for indiscipline, I would say it should be the non-commissioned officer doing that. And took that when I was a First Sergeant and if somebody brought an Article 15 or something to us, to the company commander and myself, reference somebody being disrespectful, I would say, okay. And I'd work with the commander, and if the platoon sergeant and their leaders wanted to do an Article 15 for somebody for that, then, okay, this is how this is going to work, though. Non-commissioned officers, it's not going to be the CQ [Charge of Quarters] that supervising extra duty, it's going to be the NCOs from your platoon, I will supervise that extra duty. And I also took that on as a Battalion Command Sergeant Major.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: It gives them ownership of their soldier.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yes. I would get frustrated when people would just leave things off on the staff duty and CQs; they have enough stuff to do. They do not need to be supervising soldiers who've had

misconduct. So, that's one of the things I did take away.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Talking about reenlisting. What led to that decision to stay in? Because you said earlier you didn't think about making it a career. So what led you to want to reenlist, and then two, why infantry?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Two things. One was, I became a peer leader inside the organization. In fact, back then they used to put sergeant's rank on you and call you an Acting Jack.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Really.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Right. And they also had DA [Department of the Army] Corporals, so corporal wasn't like it is today where a local commander can say, you're a corporal. They had Department of the Army corporals. I kind of liked it. I liked being responsible. I liked having some responsibility. I liked leading. I liked the physical fitness aspect of the Army. We had infantrymen as our security people and I'd hear their stories and what they had done, the

kind of things -- they did not like the force protection, physical security aspect of what they were doing. But they would talk about what they did. I also read a couple books. They were phasing my MOS out, and that's what the patriot system came from. It came out to replace the Nike Hercules System.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Nike personnel.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: It replaced the Nike Hercules--they talked to me about. So I then talked to them about becoming a warrant officer and I really didn't want to, and I just wanted to try the infantry.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, did you make sergeant before you left Germany or was that later?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: As soon as I signed into Fort Bragg after I finished AIT.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Okay. Before we get to Fort Bragg, so Germany as an acting jack you said, and as a soldier over there, what are some of the greatest challenges you had over there that you may have learned from besides the Article 15? Is there any other thing that stands out? You said you

were there almost four years in Germany?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah. I think I was there -- I don't know if I was there four years. I was there at least three.

I think I learned the importance of being at the right place at the right time in the right uniform. The inspections, being able to inspect soldiers, just by the nature of being associated in the PRP program, Personnel Reliability Program, having a clearance. I grew. I grew up a lot because, like I said, I was not the smartest -- I would say I wasn't the smartest. I was very immature. There was a lot of beer to drink there. But, I learned. I think I grew up quite a bit, and I think I learned - so, one was the leadership. The leadership, being able to see past immaturity and help you grow, and then being able to discipline you without scarring you for life. I think I'll talk about that a little bit more when we get to the battalion type level of leadership.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I did some silly things

that, in today's Army would not be accepted at all. And I'm just talking about general mischief and misconduct. It wouldn't be tolerated at all in some cases.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, when you decided to reenlist for infantry, you had to go to AIT?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I did. It was awesome.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Was that right after you left Germany, or when did you go to AIT?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I went to PLDC before I left Germany.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: That's Primary Leadership Development Course?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yes. So, today's basic leader course.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I went to the basic leader course, came back, did leave, and then from leave from Germany. I drove my motorcycle from Bunker Hill, West Virginia, to Fort Benning in March. It is

really cold without a fairing and the proper clothing. But I drove down to Fort Benning and I went to jump school first. I had three weeks of jump school, and then I signed in for AIT, which is basically basic training, because you fall in the last week of basic training, so the drill sergeants got me. I was not segregated from the general population, but they used me and, they really used me as an extra NCO. They did a good job using me and I really enjoyed it.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Were you the only what the Army calls prior service guy in there?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I was.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: And I loved it. And I felt like a real soldier. Plus, the drill sergeants took advantage of my experience and maturity, and I had no problems. It was perfect. I loved it.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: I know when I was in school they had like a platoon guide. Were you like the leader of your soldiers?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I was the platoon guide.

I was the assistant drill sergeant. When the drill sergeant didn't want to give a class on something like setup a uniform, teach the troopers how to set up their Class A's... Hey, Corporal Schroeder, teach these guys how to set up their Class A uniforms.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: You were basically getting hands-on NCO training.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Oh, I was getting hands-on. We were getting ready for a Dress Green inspection and I'm in there tying ties for privates, and it was good.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: After your AIT, you were assigned to 2nd Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment there at Fort Bragg. I'm tracking that you were there about four years or a little more than four years.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I was.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: What duty positions did you serve in there when you first got there and then throughout those four years?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: That's kind of a unique

story too. So, I show up to Fort Bragg and I got promoted to sergeant right away because of promotion points. As soon as I earned my MOS and I got slotted in a sergeant position and I got promoted. So, I show up from replacement to my company orderly room and the unit was in the field. So, the orderly room NCO takes my packet. I'm filling out all my stuff, he takes my PT card, he takes my 2-1, formerly, now it's known as an ERB.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Enlisted Records Brief.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yes. And he asked me what schools I'd been to, and so I told him what schools I had been to, and he said, what schools would you like to go to? I said, well, I don't know. What's available? And he said, well, we have Recondo course, we have the Machine Gun Leaders course, and then there's Ranger School, but nobody wants to go to Ranger School. Well, I just finished reading the book about Rangers. I said, well, what do you got to do to go to Ranger School? He said, well, I guess PT

[Physical Training] tests and if you pass the PT test, they put you on an order of merit list [OML] to go to Ranger School. I said, sounds easy enough to me. He said, well, they have a test this week. You just show up and you take your thing down there and you take the PT test. So, I went down, and the unit went back in from the field, so I figured I'd go set up my room. I had all of my equipment, got my room set up, went and took the PT test. The unit came back from the field. They had a couple days to recover, and then we were going back into the field. So, they come out of the field, then they recover, prep, and we did a jump. So, my first jump in the 82nd [Airborne Division] was a battalion mass attack on Camp Mackall Airfield, and that was my sixth jump. Typically, that's not necessarily how they want you to do it. They want to ease you in there.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Right.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: But, we jumped in and then I was in the field for a few days. And the First Sergeant came and talked with the platoon sergeant.

Hey, you have that Schroeder guy, and you got to have him get his stuff. We got to take him in. What? He just got here. (inaudible) Yeah, oh yeah. He's got to go to Ranger School. So, less than six weeks after basic training, or finishing AIT for 11 Bravo, I was starting Ranger School.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Wow. So, if you were in Germany you would have gone from being a peer to a new sergeant, maybe in charge of some of your peers. But you didn't really experience that because you had changed units.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I had changed units.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, you showed up and everybody knew you were a sergeant already.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: They knew me as a sergeant already, and then, really they didn't know me because I went away a few weeks later and went to Ranger School, and that's at a time when there weren't a lot of enlisted guys that were Ranger qualified in companies. There was only one other guy - enlisted person in my company that was Ranger qualified, and he

had come from a 1st Ranger Battalion.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, in the 82nd [Airborne Division] back then that wasn't common.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: It was not common.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: That's changed, obviously.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: That has changed.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Let's talk about Ranger School. How long was that? I know it's in phases and it's changed over the years. What was your experience in Ranger School? How did that go?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I loved it. (Laughter) Everything that I experienced -- you hear horror stories, and you get there, and it's, well, it's kind of bad, but -- it's kind of bad, but when you look around, there's people that are hurting worse than you, so, I figured, I'll just do what they told me. My thought was, I was successful in Ranger School because I was expecting the worst, and I didn't think it was as bad as what it could be. And the other thing that I think did me good was, I had no bad

habits. So, I listened to the classes that they gave us and I did things the way they told me to do it. And so, I didn't get caught up on, well, this is how the way we do it in our unit. I saw a lot of people who would get frustrated because, well, we don't do it like this in our unit. Well, that's not your unit, it's Ranger School, and they're teaching you how they want you to do it. Just do it the way they want you to do it.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Did they have people there from, I guess a variety of backgrounds; NCOs, Officers?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: This one had officers, and officers out of our unit.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Did you know who was who or did they strip you guys of your rank [insignia]?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Well, they take your rank off, but you talk. So, (inaudible) you figure it out. I mean, you figure it out.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: That has no

bearing on how training goes or who's in charge.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: No. They tell you who's in charge. I learned a lot about leadership there. So, some of the things I was lacking when, -- like I said, when I joined the Army, I was lacking confidence, and so that provided me, it gave me confidence because I was able to get through it. There were some uncomfortable times, but I was capable of doing it. It helped provide me some confidence, and that way, when I got back to my unit, there's a lot of people that went to Ranger School and failed. I went to Ranger School and I was fortunate. I got through without getting recycled and I passed the course, but I also realized that I there were a lot of things that I didn't know. I think one of the things that really helped me was transitioning MOSs, I felt that I was behind my peers, and so I worked really hard to try to -- I was a fire team leader, so I had a fire team, so I had two or three troopers and it was my job to train them, but first I had to train myself. But, I trained myself and them at the same time.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: After Ranger School, how long had you been in [the Army] at that point? So, you're a fairly new sergeant. About how many years had you been in, you think, at that point?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Four years. Just over four years.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: That's fairly early. Fairly quick.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah. Four-and-a-half years. So, in four-and-a-half years I was a sergeant with a Ranger Tab.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Wow. That's good. Having that Ranger School experience where you're basically taught to be an expert in small unit tactics, right? So, tactically you should have come back to that unit very sound, but what were some of the things you had to work on?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Well, just the basics-- equipment, understanding equipment. There are some finer points. You're basically sound. Tactically and technically sound. But, just learning how to do it

better, understanding. And I think the depth of knowledge and experience. That's one of the things that I think we have gotten away from today and I'll talk about that more later on in time, but our officers, our platoon leaders, our company commanders, battalion commanders, they lean on us based on the depth of knowledge and experience of the unit we're serving in right now. And I think in some cases we've allowed, we've tried to broaden ourselves to the point where, I want you to be good in this type of unit, this type of unit, this type of unit, and that type of unit. When I came out of Ranger School, I was still in the 82nd, a team leader in the 82nd. The way we trained back then was very good and it was meticulous. So, when we were starting a training cycle in the 82nd, all leaders, team leaders and above, would go out and we would go to the Airborne Leaders course, and we would work on troop leading procedures, develop our SOPs [Standard Operating Procedures].

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: And this was in the 82nd?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Correct. Yeah. We'd work on TTPs [Tactics, Techniques and Procedures], and we would do that for a week, and then we would come back and an XO and a couple people would stay back and supervise the troopers as they're doing maintenance and other things. And then, we would do that for a week, we would come back, and then we would go out to the field for two weeks and do squad and platoon, work on the SOPs and battle drills. And then we would do squad and platoon for two weeks, then we would come back, and then we go out and do company training for two weeks. And then we would come back and then we would go out and do battalion training.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: This was like every year?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: It was a six-week cycle. So, it was a couple times a year. So, we really worked on just doing the basics over and over and over again and becoming a master of your craft. That really helped me.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: I understand you

were promoted to staff sergeant about halfway through your tour there at Fort Bragg. How did your duties and responsibilities change once you became a staff sergeant?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Duties and responsibilities. I think everything gets layered on top of each other. And so, team leaders lead by example, do as I do. They're kind of like a peer leader, kind of like a senior peer leader. Follow me. IMT [Individual Movement Techniques]. As a team leader, would control the movement rate and movement of my team by my bounds in the direction I would move. And so, just recently we've been working on this, what do I need a team leader to do? So, really, I only need a team leader to be able to do three basic things. And looking back on my time, a team leader, if I can get them to do three things; I need them to lead, inspect and train. I need them to lead by personal example. And I need them to inspect equipment for accountability, serviceability and being able to place systems into operation. And I need them

to be able to train physical fitness, warrior tasks and battle drills, MOS skills and field craft, fundamental special skills, and then, I need to make sure that my troopers are -- and I need to be compliant with my professional education stuff. What the difference is when a staff sergeant -- that's the first time -- Staff sergeant is when I realized that I was a professional. I don't think until I was a staff sergeant that I really understand or believe that I was a professional soldier committed and felt totally committed to the Army. I think everything else prior to that, there was a debate. Maybe or maybe not. Once I got promoted to staff sergeant, and when I was squad leader, responsible for -- that's the first time -- some place I read, that's the first time in your career where you're responsible for other leaders in your organization. And, you're also, as a staff sergeant, you're a combat leader. You're part of the soldiers' chain of command. You are the combat leader. So, I think staff sergeants, they have to plan, they have to track, and they have to execute.

Because they're responsible. That's the only level of leadership where you are responsible for the execution of a mission, a combat mission. A team leader's not responsible for execution of a combat mission. They do tasks, they do other things. A platoon sergeant's not responsible for the execution of a combat mission. They contribute. A first sergeant is not responsible. Only commanders and staff sergeants are responsible for the execution of a mission.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, did you welcome that responsibility?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I did, actually. I was really disappointed that I always had platoon leaders. I was disappointed, but it was good because I loved having platoon leaders.

Here's something that was different back then, though, too, that we don't have today. Yeah, I loved EIB [Expert Infantryman Badge] training, individual training --but, SQT. We had it back then. We don't have it now.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Skills

Qualification Test, I think it was called.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yes. Skills Qualification Test. And, I found that to be very valuable.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: And what was your experience with that? How did that go? What did that entail?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: You had to study. You had to know what an M21 mine was.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: This was by position.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: By position. So, by position, by MOS. You would get tested on these things. And, I took pride in making sure I did well on the test. But I took more pride in how well my subordinates did on the test.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, it kind of proved your knowledge as an infantryman.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Well, not only that, I'm primary trainer for my troopers. So, I'm responsible for my troopers, and if they're not trained well, I'm

responsible for individual, team and crew training.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: And you mentioned the excellence in infantry badge [Expert Infantryman Badge].

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: You think that's one of the things we have left today?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: We have that. And we also have the EFMB, which is a very good test.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Expert Field Medical Badge (EFMB)?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yes. It is an Expert Field Medical Badge, and Command Sergeant Major Davenport and TRADOC [Training and Doctrine Command] is working on developing an Expert Action Badge, and recently there was a pilot test done on it, at JBLM [Joint Base Lewis-McChord] and maybe other places. But, those are outstanding training opportunities. And troopers learn a lot by going through that type of training, but also subordinate leaders learn a lot by putting that training on. So, when you have to plan

it, resource it, rehearse it, and execute that training, and if you do that correctly, you set the stage for all the training that comes after that. If you develop your individual training, then you have the NCOs and they're doing it, but also the officers are involved and they get to see it. But, you have to resource it. So, you plan it, resource, rehearse, execute --Oh, it's almost like that...

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Training management.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah. I found those to be very, very good.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: While you're still in that unit, you deployed to Sinai, Egypt, and participated in Operation Desert Shield or Storm. Did you deploy as a member of the 2-505 [2nd Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment] or were you attached to another unit?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: No, 2-505. I went over. So, we all went together.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: What was the

time frame of that deployment? And where did you guys go?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Well, we went to Sinai. And, what was the time frame for that? '89, '90, close to '91. So, '90 to '91. Right in there. '89 to '90, in there. It was great. We were there as part of the Multi Force Observer and really we were there to observe and report and see if there were any violations in the --

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: In Egypt?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah, in Egypt. But, it was a squad leader's dream because we were doing independent operations. I was out on a site by myself with my squad for 21 days at a time. And then we'd come back for a week to refit, then we'd go back out for 21 days.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Wow. Does this still go on during Desert Storm, when the actual Operation Desert Storm, or did that change with Desert Storm?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: No, so we were out there

and it was great. It was six months. It was a deployment for six months. We did a lot of stuff in six months while we were out there. It was a squad leader's dream. So, we weren't necessarily back for (inaudible). Twenty-one days out, and we would be twenty-one days back, so in those twenty-one days, we'd have seven days off, seven days force pro [force protection], and then seven days prep. But, during that time we did an EIB. We also do some trips. I got some great trips and traveled into Israel and Asia. It was in Israel we went to Tel Aviv and went to the Wailing Wall, we went to the birthplace of Christ, we walked the 12 Points of the Cross. I went in the Dome of the Rock mosque, the third most holy site in Islam. I don't know how we pulled that off, but we were able to go in there and see it, and been able to walk up on Mount Sinai. Went to the Museum in Alexandria. Went to see the Sphinx, climbed on the pyramids. So, it was a great trip. So, we learned a lot. We got to see a lot. So, it was six months of a squad leader's dream, and then we came back and we had

14 days off after we got back from Sinai, and then we started prepping up and getting ready to get back to DRF-1 [Division Ready Force-1] status. And to do that, you had to go back to the CTC [Combat Training Center] to get certified. So, we came back, had two weeks off, started doing our training progression, and we ended --

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: For rapid deployment?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: So, we went through our training progression and we ended up and we did that accelerated and we ended up going to -- we were at Fort Polk. No, not Fort Polk. Fort Chaffee, Arkansas, for JRTC, Joint Readiness Training Center.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Well, that's still there.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah. Well, five days into it, or somewhere during that time frame, Saddam Hussein had gone into Kuwait, invaded Kuwait. So, we

got called. Unload all your ammo, pack your stuff, get together, we're going back to Fort Bragg. We got on a plane, stopped got back at to Fort Bragg, and we had five days to be on planes going over to Saudi Arabia.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Okay, so, you were in the Sinai for Desert Shield, then when Desert St--

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: No. We were in the Sinai. We came back from the Sinai. We started training up for JRTC. We were at JRTC when Saddam Hussein --

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Invaded Kuwait.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: -- invaded Kuwait.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So then you went over.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: And then we went over in August. So, we were some of the first ones over there.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: In 1990. Okay. So, what was your mission called in the Sinai? Did it

have a different name?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Over there, Desert Storm and Desert Shield. I can't remember what the name of the mission name was.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: But, we were over there for eight months, I think. The first thing was to defense of Saudi Arabia. And, they took us out and they showed us where Iraq started coming down towards Saudi Arabia. They gave my squad, all right, this is your overpass. You will stand here and defend Saudi Arabia with your squad at this point right here.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: A lot of responsibility?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah. I guess. I'm glad they didn't come then. (Laughter) I'm glad we went the other way.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: How do you feel your squad and your unit performed over there in the Sinai and then in Saudi Arabia?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I think it was good. We

learned a lot. We didn't see a lot of stuff. Really, we moved out along the west and went up to the Euphrates River, and we didn't have a lot of stuff. We were a light --we were an airborne unit. We didn't have any tanks. We didn't have any vehicles. We started finding Republican Guard trucks and fixing those things and basically, we ended up with every squad had their own truck. But it was a Republican Guard truck and then what we did is, we would go and clear in sector. We would clear caches and basically, that's about what we did.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Weapons caches.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Weapons, ammo caches.

Anybody we rolled up --we would detain people and move them back to the rear. That's about the extent of what we did.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Were there any key challenges over there as a squad leader in a deployed environment that you learned from that maybe you took with you to your next assignment?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Our leaders did a really

good job of keeping us focused on training. We did a lot of training. We did lots of rehearsals. We stayed busy. We stayed fit. Yeah, we did not do a lot of just sitting around and waiting. Our leadership did a great job keeping us engaged, and so I learned a lot from that. Yeah.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Then you deployed back at a certain point after Desert Storm, back to Fort Bragg, right?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: We did.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Did you go to any other schools after that? After Fort Bragg that you want to talk about?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah, I did. I went to -- I think -- Well, I did. I went to a couple. One was the Jumpmaster course. And, that's the only course I ever failed in the Army.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Hard course?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Well, it was a lot harder because I didn't have a lot of experience. I went with 12 jumps, so that was the minimum number of

jumps --

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: To go to school.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: -- you would have to go to school, and so I went right then, and I just wasn't ready.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Did you choose to go or your leadership wanted you to go?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah, I wanted to go. But, I just wasn't prepared. So, I went, I failed, I prepared, and I went back. And I passed the course.

Another course that our brigade put on was-- they did--a Marksmanship Trainers course. They put that together. And I think that course really shaped me a lot as far as training. It would really frustrate me that we would, in some cases, outsource our training to others. We have plenty of competent trainers in our organizations and we don't need to bring people in from the outside. We need to give them, here's what we want you to do, here's the end

state we want you to meet, here's the resources, including time, that we're going to give you to put this training on. Go ahead and execute. And really, that's one of the things that I took away from that course. It made me a better marksman, but really, it's not about me becoming a better marksman, it's about me being able to teach my troopers to be better marksmen.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: And those young sergeants now under you as a squad leader.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah. So, that was one of the things, I think the importance of competition. Significant challenges or things I faced while I was at Fort Bragg, I think a couple things that came out of that was, my squad did best squad competition. So, we did the battalion best squad competition, we won the best squad competition. Then going to brigade, I had my battalion sergeant major brought me and said, hey, congratulations; you guys did a great job. Hey, do you have any guys that are weaker than the others that you might want to augment your squad to have a

better chance at the brigade competition? I said, Sergeant Major, I appreciate you telling us we did a good job, but, the squad is the squad that I took and, I would rather just not my squad compete at the brigade level if I had to take any one person out of it. I said, because, we'll either win as a squad or we won't win as a squad. But, I do not feel comfortable taking anybody out.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, he was asking if you wanted to take soldiers from other squads and platoons?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah. I don't want to do that.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: And then we also, when we were in the Sinai, my squadron wanted to do the Force Skills Competition. That's a competition with force skills, so all the NATO countries would compete in this thing, and usually the Fijians always won.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Who was that?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Fijians.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: How do you spell that? I haven't heard of that one before.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: They're from Fiji. I can't spell it.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Oh, Fiji. Okay.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah. And so, we had a squad from the scout platoon from the battalion that had been identified, and they had been training up for a few months, getting ready for that, and about three weeks out, my squad said, hey, we want to do that. I said, are you serious? And I said, I'll ask, but if you want to do it, we're going to work to get ready, if that's what you want to do. And then I told them, my only goal is to beat the scouts.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, you were given the time by your unit to train up?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: We did it while we were out on the OP [Observation Post].

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, while you were out on mission.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: So, we did it while we were out on the OP. And we trained up and we went up there, and in three-weeks' time we trained up and we went up and competed in the competition and we ended up, we beat one of the Fijian teams. They had three teams. And we also beat the scouts. So, the importance of competition and building teams. Competition, I think, is very important, and I think we do not place -- and it doesn't take a lot of resources to do competitions at any level, either at the platoon level or company level or battalion level.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Do you see that making everybody collectively better --

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yes.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: --doing competitions?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: And, I was very happy. I don't remember any significant challenges. I always pushed my people hard. I believe that most soldiers

want to be challenged. I don't think anybody comes in the Army with the attitude of, this is going to be easy and I'm just going to coast along. I think there are some that are disappointed, and they're allowed to, so they just get comfortable doing it. But, I enjoyed pushing my guys, and I pushed myself, and I pushed my troops, and I think they enjoyed it. They enjoyed being a good squad. One time we ended up with a 291 PT average, and our SQT average was 93.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Out of 100?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Out of 100.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Sergeant Major, in December 1991, so not long after you guys got back from Desert Storm, you were assigned to Fort Benning, Georgia, where you served with the 3rd Ranger Batt [Battalion], 75th Ranger Regiment. You were there for a couple years. When you got there, what did you do? What positions were you assigned when you got to the Ranger Battalion?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I got picked up in the PAC [Personnel Action Center]. So, Sergeant Major

Ralph Beam came in, in the PAC and I was supposed to be going to Bravo Company. And he said, hey, -- because Charlie Company was booted up against the PAC, so he came into there and said, who's he and where was he going? First Sergeant, he's going to Bravo Company. He said, bullshit. I've been needing staff sergeants. He's coming to Charlie Company. Yes, First Sergeant. So, I got there and then he had me in and he was asking me, where have you been, what have you done? And we went through that in the first sergeant's office, and he said, well, okay. And I'd been a squad leader for a while. We're going to make you an AT Section Sergeant.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Anti-tank?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Anti-tank.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Anti-tank.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I said, First Sergeant, I ain't never heard of that before. (Laughter)

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: There's a challenge for you.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: So, I had never done it

before. We had Carl Gustafs and 90mm recoilless rifles and we were dismounted in three...three two-person teams. So, I learned a little bit about that and being in the weapons platoon. I went to the weapons platoon and did that for a short while, and then they made me a squad leader in first platoon and then I became the platoon sergeant for first platoon, 3rd of the 75th, Charlie Company.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Did you put in for this unit or were you chosen to go there?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yes. Well, funny, the other guy that had a Ranger Tab when I was --

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: In the 82nd?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: -- in the 82nd, he had left and gone to 3rd Battalion, and I'd been there for a while when he came back, and I sent him a note and I said, hey, -- this was before emails and all this other stuff. I sent him a letter, and he called me and said, hey, just send me your stuff. So, I sent him a couple NCOERs [Non-Commissioned Officer Evaluation Reports] and my 2-1 file, and he gave it to

the battalion sergeant major at 3rd Battalion and then the battalion sergeant major called me, and my company in the 82nd said, hey, do you want to come down here? I said, absolutely, Sergeant Major. And so, he said, okay, I'll make it happen.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, he got with Human Resources Command?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah. They figured that out, and I was only there a couple years, but I went to JRTC [Joint Readiness Training Center] twice, I went to the Nevada test site, we were out at Fort Bliss for quarterly training, went to Scotland two times, Panama, and I had a lot of different experiences there. I really enjoyed it.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Were you at Panama for the operation [Operation Just Cause] or was it just a training mission?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: No, just training.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Training mission. What was different about that, being in Panama vice Egypt, or Saudi Arabia? Were there any

major differences?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: We were there for training, so, it was just the terrain and --

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Did you get the opportunity to work with the Panamanian soldiers at all or anything like that?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: No.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Okay. Any takeaways from Panama?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Well, not necessarily Panama, but just being in the Ranger Regiment, exposed to high standards and solid leaders across the entire organization where, like in the 82nd -- there were leaders in the 82nd that were just as good, if not better, than those in the Ranger Regiment. But, in the Ranger Regiment it was, all the leaders were good because they could be selective and, if you're going to be a team leader, you're going to have a Ranger Tab. So, if you're going to be a Green Tab leader in the Ranger Regiment, everybody's going to be Ranger qualified.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Did you have soldiers that weren't, when you got there?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Well, we had soldiers, but not leaders.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Right. So, you had to send some soldiers to Ranger School.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: This is part of it if they want to be there and they want to be a leader in the regiment, they have to have a Ranger Tab. So, being exposed to high standards, solid leaders across the organization, and incredible pride and esprit de corps, those were very refreshing. It was a very good opportunity for me. I enjoyed it. I enjoyed my time there.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Skipping ahead a few years here, after your Ranger Regiment, in May of '94 you were assigned to Fort Benning with the 1st Battalion, 50th Infantry Regiment, where you served as a drill sergeant. Were you selected by the Department of the Army to be a drill sergeant or was that something you put in for, volunteered for?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: No, I didn't volunteer for that. In fact, I didn't want to.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: You wanted to stay in the Ranger Regiment?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: No. I was getting ready to leave there, and I didn't want to, but, when you go to drill sergeant school, they're going to ask you, hey, who doesn't want to be here? I was a young Sergeant First Class coming from the Ranger Regiment. They asked me who doesn't want to be here, so I raised my hand. And they yelled at me.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So you had made Sergeant First Class before you went.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So you're thinking platoon sergeant time and now you get picked up to be a drill sergeant.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: No, I just didn't want to be a drill sergeant. I mean, yeah. I didn't know what I wanted to do, but I didn't want to be a drill sergeant.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Why did you feel that way back then?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Oh, I don't know. I just didn't want to do it. But, they started giving me a hard time. Hey, just because I don't want to be here, that doesn't mean I'm not going to be a good drill sergeant. There's a lot of things I've done that I haven't wanted to do, but I'm going to do well.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Was it common to have a Sergeant First Class in drill sergeant school back then?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I was a young Sergeant First Class. So, I had just got promoted. I was platoon sergeant and Sergeant First Class or staff sergeant promotable, platoon sergeant for a little while, and then I got promoted to Sergeant First Class.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: I know drill sergeant school has changed. It used to have a lot of Sergeant E-5s there and they went away from that.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Well, I think the Ranger

Regiment owed, they have to pay their price, so they're a different branch. So, like the infantry branch would have to pay theirs, and at that time the Ranger Regiment had to pay their --

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: The same way with their career progression?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: -- used to be --

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: We have to give so many people to this, so they gave me to drill sergeant. So, I didn't want to do it, but I'm glad I did, because when I went, plus the Ranger Regiment, and after having been in the 82nd, and being in the Ranger Regiment, I thought I was a pretty good trainer. I thought I was a pretty good trainer. But, you can always get better. I think I learned to be a better trainer, and I also learned what helped me for later in life, especially as a platoon sergeant, and first sergeant down the road is, I learned what troopers looked like when they got to the Army. So, I knew what the drill sergeant had had to do and how far

those soldiers had come to get to be able to pass the PT tests. So, it really helped me. I really enjoyed my time as a drill sergeant. It was really hard, but I really enjoyed it.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: And you may not have asked this, it may not been casual conversation back then, but what do you think the mix of volunteers versus guys like you that were picked by the Department of the Army to be drill sergeants, and in your particular unit, what do you think the ratio was?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I have no clue.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Were most of the guys you served with pretty good NCOs that were there? Do you think the Army was picking the right folks as well as, what we call "volun-told folks" now? Or volunteers.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah, for the most part they were pretty good. For the most part they were pretty good. I mean, they were just as good as -- I think if we would have had all the drill sergeants that I'd served with as drill sergeants in a normal

TO&E [Table of Organization and Equipment] unit, it would have been a great unit. So, I was happy with them. That's really where I learned how to deal with different sides of my -- I never worked with -- so, I was 24-uniform, but then, that was only short-lived and, so, I was 11 Bravo, 82nd and 3rd Ranger Battalion. Then I got exposed to 11-mikes (11M) --

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, Bradley, mechanized Infantrymen.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: And, so we always hated each other, right? So, nobody liked each other. And then I learned that you don't have to be -- it's not an MOS that makes an NCO a good NCO. It's being a good NCO makes a good NCO. Being a good soldier makes a good NCO. It's not about MOS.

And then, I had never worked with females before.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Was this in drill school you're talking about?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: No, this was as a drill sergeant. In the supply room, and in the PAC. And

then we had females. I had never been around a female soldier before. So, it was good. I learned a lot.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: In drill sergeant school itself, your instructors, did you learn things from those guys and gals that may have helped you, the way you looked at things in the future, or made you an even better trainer?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I can't remember.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: You can't re--
(laughter)

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I mean, I --

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Drill sergeant school was like a whirlwind?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: No, it was reciting modules, it was keep your wall locker setup. Basically it was --

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: More memorization and --

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah, it was a lot of memorization. I think if you're a good NCO, you're going to be a good drill sergeant. If you're a good

NCO, you're going to be a good recruiter. I think most of the things, -- I think being able to teach, deliver different forms of instruction. I think they helped with that. Comfortable standing in front of a group. And, I think the biggest thing that I learned is how to teach drill and ceremonies and deliver the drill and ceremonies and teach that. I think that's the biggest thing I learned. Most of the other stuff, it was just refine skills, some skills that I already had.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Looking back at that time, the kids joining the Army back then under your care there in basic, or was it OSUT you took, One Station Unit Training for infantry?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: I'm sure you ask them, but what do you think the kids' motivation back then for joining at that time frame, the mid-'90s there?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I don't think it -- well, until September 2001, I don't think it was much

different. Until then, you have a certain portion that join because they have, it's a family tradition. You have a certain number that join because they're just patriotic. You have some that join because they're looking for adventure. You have some that join because they have no clue what they're going to do or where they're going, so they're trying to find themselves. I don't think that really changed a lot until September 2001.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Sergeant Major, in September of '96, you were done with your drill sergeant time and you were assigned to the Schofield Barracks in Hawaii where you served with the 2nd Battalion, 5th Infantry Regiment, and you were there for about two years.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, now you're a Sergeant First Class, Senior NCO when you get there, and where did they assign you once you got there?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I went there and I was a platoon sergeant, so I became an infantry platoon

sergeant, and I did that for a little while. And they were getting ready to move me to the S3 shop, but just before that, while I was a platoon sergeant, my company commander had just completed Air Assault School. And we just met in passing in the orderly room, and I said, oh, hey, congratulations, sir, good job. And he said, well, have you been to Air Assault, and I said, why? I hadn't sent anybody to Air Assault School. Well, I'd been sending my troopers to Air Assault School because I really don't think I need to go.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Right.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I said, I'm Jumpmaster qualified, I'm Pathfinder qualified, I'm Rappel Master, I'm a FRIES [Fast Rope Insertion Extraction System] Master. I just don't see the need for me to go to Air Assault School. I've been sending my troopers to Air Assault School. He said, you're going to Air Assault School because you need to set the example for your soldiers. You're really going to need that. So, anyway, I lost the argument.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: And you went.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Because he's the commander. So, I went to school and it worked out pretty good because I did well in school and I graduated.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: It's a two-week course back then?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I think it was three weeks.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Three weeks?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I think it was three weeks. But, I was also the ruck foot march champion, and I found myself still in pretty good shape. And, they were getting ready to send me to the Battalion S3 to be the Battalion S3 NCOIC. But, I graduated about two months before they started Best Ranger tryouts. So, since they were going to move me out of my platoon, I talked to the battalion sergeant major and said, hey, I've always wanted to, but I've never wanted to leave my squad or platoon to compete in the Best Ranger Competition, but since you're going to

take me out of my platoon anyway, would you support me in going to compete and doing the division competition just to see if I can make the team? And so, he said, okay. He said, you're not getting any younger. You could get hurt doing this. I said, I realize that. He said, it's not going to help you professionally. I said, I know that too. Look, I just want to do it. And so, I didn't want to do it in the past because I'd seen people take off for months to prepare for it and they do it every year. And my philosophy was, in the past, the best Ranger is a squad leader and platoon sergeant in his platoon training his troopers. That's the best Ranger. But, since they were taking me out of my platoon, -- so, he supported me and I went and did it and it was a good time. I enjoyed it. And then I came back and did my S3 time. That's when the battalion ops [operations] NCO was in a Master Sergeant position and I was a Sergeant First Class, so I learned a lot. I learned a lot doing that and I'm glad I did.

But, we were busy. Very active unit. In

two years, I went to JRTC twice. I went to the Big Island [Hawaii] for training twice. I went to Japan for a five-week battalion deployment, and I went to Australia for a four-and-a-half-week company deployment. So, it was very good. One of the challenges that we had while we were there, our platoon was undermanned. At that time in the Army, I don't know if it was just in the Army or if it was -- I don't know what it was, but we had a 19-man platoon.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: '96, '97, yeah, that was at the height or the low point of the drawdown.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah. We were hurting. So, trying to do tactics when you're doing tactics in threes, and you don't have three, it makes it kind of hard. And there's no way to have a reserve.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Yeah, '96, '97, I remember Army wise we were kind of at our low point as far as funding and personnel.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Across the Army

we were hurting back then.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I think my platoon had a harder time adjusting to me than I had adjusting to them. So, I think it was good.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: From Schofield Barracks, you were assigned to Charlie Company, 3rd Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment, which was part of the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) at Campbell, and this was in '99.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: And then, shortly after you got there, you were promoted to Master Sergeant E-8.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, what brought about you going there to Fort Campbell?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Well, I left Hawaii after only being there two years, but what they were doing was, they were -- actually I was planning for the next year out, and I had been talking to the 2nd Ranger Battalion sergeant major, seeing if I would be

able to get a follow-on assignment there, but at the same time, they curtailed a whole bunch of NCOs' assignments from Hawaii and made them shorter, and then they were going to send them back a year early.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: What was their reasoning for that?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I don't know. There was a whole bunch of us got --

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: It was supposed to be a three-year assignment, right?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Right. So, they just curtailed a whole bunch of people because they needed them or whatever, but --

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: And then you got to choose, or had some choices of what --?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I had no choices. Well, no, I had no choices. They said, 101st. The 2nd Ranger Battalion sergeant major said, hey, I might be able to work with you and get you here. But, you'd be like third in line for a company. And I said, well, if they're curtailing me to go to the 101st, they got

to have a company there waiting for me. So, I'm going to take a company at the 101st instead of going and waiting.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: What happened when you arrived?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Well, they put me in a little bit of a holding pattern, so Sergeant Major West, who was the brigade sergeant major, he put me on a project to develop a team leader course for the brigade, and then I worked on that, and then they sent me to the first sergeant course, and as soon as I got back from the first sergeant course, they made me a first sergeant in Charlie Company.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Was this a local first sergeant course?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: No, this was at Fort Bliss.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Okay. What did you think about that course? Was it helpful?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I think it would have been helpful if I would have had a clue as to what

they were talking about in the course. It probably would have helped me more had I gone through two months' of time in the front seat of the first sergeant or had some clue about what they were talking about.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So there was no read-ahead, and this is what you need to study before you get here?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: No. No, I just showed up and they started going over USR [Unit Status Report] and there was finance report, and, AAA 117/294, so it was a good course, but --I didn't have any of the context to be able to put the stuff --

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Why you would need to know that stuff.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Right. I figured it out though.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, your first sergeant didn't help you out, or whoever, before you went to the course?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: No.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Nobody helped you out before you went?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: No. And what I also didn't get was -- that's one of the things I did when I was a -- figured it out and I'd been a first sergeant for a bit, we had duty platoon, and so when we had duty platoon, whoever the duty platoon was, monthly, and it would rotate, whoever would be responsible for things, I would have them do the AAA 117/294, I would have them do --

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: The promotion manageable rosters.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I had them review that. I had them review the unit commander's finance report.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: These were platoon sergeants?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I would have the platoon sergeants do it, and then I would check behind them. But I would show them, all right, this is how we do this, this is what we do, this is what you do for the unit commander's finance report. You go through here

--

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Well, they should know anyway. This should help you --

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: So I was showing them, and then I'd say, okay, you go do it.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: And then, I would get it back and I would check it. So that way when it was time for them to go to school one day, they would have had some experience.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, you served as a first sergeant there for how long? A year or so?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I can't -- Man, I can't remember. Yeah. I guess a year or so.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Because -- in 2001, November, so about, almost two years, I guess.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: So, I was there almost two years at Charlie Company.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: And you moved to Charlie, 2nd Battalion.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah. Kind of, but not

really. So, this is how that all worked. But, in that first company, it was really great. I really enjoyed it. We had -- there's not a place I've ever been where we haven't been busy. We did EIB [Expert Infantryman Badge training] for two years, so I had to have been there at least through two cycles of EIB. In fact, at the end, after two years, we had 72 out of 106 soldiers in the company had EIB.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: That's not an easy course.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: No. That's a very high --

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: And that was run by the division?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: The brigade would run it. But, we also had 20 Ranger-qualified soldiers in the company, which was --

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: It was drastically different than your time in the 82nd.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: -- which was higher than a lot. It's about setting the conditions for others

to have opportunities. We went to JRTC. We also did some Thermal Weapons Sight testing. So, like the PAS-13s [night vision goggles] that we have right now, we were testing those --

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: For the Army.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: -- for the Army. That was a really good time. And then, Sergeant Major West, who was the division commander, command sergeant major at the time, and General Cody called on me. Well, actually before that, one of the things I got tasked to do, is I went and served on the Chief of Staff of the Army's panel for training and leader development.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Was this prior to 9/11, September?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Oh, yeah, yeah. This was before 9/11. This was -- I can't remember what year it was, but it was when General Shinseki was --

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: 2000, probably.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: -- the Chief of Staff. So, we went out -- I got a 90-day tasking to go to

[Fort] Leavenworth as a first sergeant, to go to Leavenworth and work on this panel for training and leader development. And I was like, what am I going to do this for? They gave me read-ahead books that were almost like packets and stuff that was almost like two feet high, and I read most of it. I won't say -- I went through most of it.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: What was the intended outcome of that?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Well, there were some things that came out of it. BOLC [Basic Officer Leader Course] came out of that.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, it's where we should go as an Army that's training and --

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yes. Where are we for training and leader development? So, it's very good. It really helped me and also it made me lead and think a lot more. They were talking about outcomes-based training at that time.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: For what ranks of the Army are we talking about this training?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: All ranks.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: All ranks.

Okay.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: It was very good. So, we did that. The other thing I did was, I was at 3-187 and then when Sergeant Major West and General Cody wanted to stand up -- do you remember the correctional custody facility [CCF] program?

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: I do. We had it in a couple of the places that I've served.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: They wanted to stand that up. So, I stood up a CCF at Fort Campbell. It was awesome. It was probably one of the best, most liberating --

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: In what capacity? Did you work with the military police?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: No, I was a dag-gone -- I was the commandant. (Laughter)

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: And a first sergeant at the same time?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: No. I left the company

and I went --

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: -- and I stood that up for the division, and we would -- sorry -- I picked a staff of 12. There was 12 of us altogether. And, we were capable of bringing in 30 troopers at a time. And you would go to CCF as a result of Article 15. Either 7 days for a company grade [Article 15] or 21 days for a field grade [Article 15]. And, we had a program of training and education, and we did it. We allowed every soldier to do AARs [After Action Reports] on their experience there. And we also had deliverables. So, any block of instruction that a trooper got, they either had a hands-on or a written test.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Now, did you come up with this curriculum yourself?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: We did. The other thing we did -- the other thing, we did rehearsals also. So, I learned a lot about rehearsals. We did rehearsals, then units got tasked (laughter) to go

through our rehearsals, our training. We did a week-long training rehearsal with all the instructors and -
-

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Now, did you get to pick your cadre? Was it all people from your particular unit?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: No. It was from the division.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: From the division.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: People would get nominated to go up there.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, each battalion or something would send a guy or gal?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: So, it was really good. It was -- troopers would go through that, and in 21 days they would raise their PT score from 50 to 70 points.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Per event?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: No. Well, total.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Total. Okay.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: On the PT tests. And the cadre's PT test, we went from like an average of about 270 to 315.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: And how long were you there?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: We started in September, and I left it in December right before -- so, I was there when the attack on the World Trade Center and all --

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: You had just got started.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: -- that stuff. We had just stood up. We had just stood up then, and then the U.S. were getting ready to deploy, and I'm like, hey, they need me. (Laughter) So, then somebody stepped up and took over CCF -- and that's how I ended up going to 2nd Battalion, because --

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM SCHROEDER: -- that's who needed us.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Well, you were kind of out of the unit anyway doing this other job.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: And I was doing the CCF and then that's who needed a first sergeant.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: As a commandant, were you a first sergeant still, or they made you wear master sergeant stripes?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah. I was a first sergeant, and they allowed me [to wear first sergeant stripes].

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Oh, that's good for morale.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: It's good for the first sergeant's morale.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, a month after you get to 2nd Batt [Battalion] there, you deployed to Afghanistan for about seven months.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: What was your guys' mission once you got over there?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: First, it was to defend

Kandahar Airfield.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: We got there December, -
- end of December, beginning of January, 2002. End of
December, 2001. And we secured the airfield, and
really, we were just security of the airfield, and
prepare for follow-on. You know, stand by and wait.
We worked on discipline, planning, and basic SOPs
while we were doing force protection.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Was there a unit
that took that airfield before you arrived, or did you
guys have to take it?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Oh, the marines -- there
were some marines there.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: When we got there, there
was nothing. We didn't even have enough 55-gallon
drums to cut in half for latrines. We were doing slit
trenches and, we were eating MREs [Meals, Ready-to-
Eat] for a while.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, you got

there a month or so -- I think the operation [Operation Enduring Freedom] started in October, so you got there the next, maybe within a month or so of the actual campaign starting.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, you guys had the airfield, but then in March, your battalion participated in Operation Anaconda.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: We did.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So now, how did that [mission] change from the airfield to that? I'm sure that was --

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Well, we did a few things. We went up to Bagram and we did some planning and we did some -- there was some planning done and we did some rehearsals. It was interesting. We did rehearsals on Chinooks to see if they can carry us over the mountains. This was before -- and the pilots had been to training, and we've put the high-performance engines in those Chinooks since then. That's probably one of the scariest helicopter rides

I've ever been on.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: How do you rehearse it if it fails the rehearsal? (Laughter)

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I mean, it was horrible.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: You just turn around if you're not going to make it?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: All I saw was rocks all around us. It was horrible. But then we got in there and we air assaulted in and we secured blocking positions to prevent Taliban movement between Afghanistan and Pakistan. And, what we didn't do a very good job of is understanding the scale of the terrain. The things that they had us take in to try to block, there's just -- there's no way. The only way you're going to -- you couldn't carry enough stuff in there to block those mountain passes.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: There's too many gulleys and alleys and stuff to cover? You'd have to stick somebody in each little alleyway?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: The terrain was just incredible. It was incredible.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, securing was not - easier...

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Well, you could do it by fire, but you're not going to put -- you couldn't carry enough concertina wire and stuff in there to slow people down.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Did some other unit, I assume, take over responsibility for the airfield when you guys got called out?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah. I'm sure they did. And some of the things that -- so, the terrain, what we didn't understand, and the conditions. It is really cold. It's really cold and the first couple months we were on the ground, -- we only brought one sleeping bag for every three people. Everybody brought a poncho liner, but only one sleeping bag for every third person.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Was that for weight, or you thought that you couldn't afford to have more than one out of every three guys down [sleeping or resting]?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: No, usually when we say force protection, it's 33 percent security is the minimum you go, right?

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Okay. So, you've got to have at least one guy awake.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Somebody's got to be up. So, the first couple nights we didn't even -- we wouldn't even let them pull their sleeping bags out, and it was freezing. I slept closer to Sergeant Ruse, my NBC [Nuclear, Biological, Chemical] NCO, than I've ever slept next to my wife. It was freezing. And, so, the conditions -- resupply, -- and we went in with three days -- with three days' worth of supplies, and we did not get resupplied until day five.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: And was it because of communications issues?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: No. Because all the Apaches got shot up and the resupply, -- the Chinooks didn't have support --

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Didn't have enough support.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: -- they had no combat escort to come in. So, that was something that we had to overcome. Then when we started getting resupplied, we had platoons spread out over four-and-a-half kilometers, so in different passes. So, we had found a gator [golf cart sized, four-wheeled off-road vehicle] that was probably the brigade commander's -- supposed to be for the brigade commander, that our company was using, to run supplies. And myself and the NBC NCO would --

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Helps if different soldiers (inaudible)

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: -- we would run them down to the base of a mountain, a squad would come down, a fire team and myself would carry some up and come back. That was my battlefield circulation, to go -- resupply was my battlefield circulation. And then, the enemy could (inaudible) -- really they had DshK [Russian-made heavy machinegun] and we had nothing that could reach out --

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: It was like a 50

caliber or 12.5mm?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah. Which can reach out any further than anything we had.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: About 1800 meters.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: They had DshKs and mortars and, -- enemy fire and then an earthquake. I never experienced an earthquake before.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, you were kind of unique, you had an earthquake.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: We had mortars coming in, DshK fire coming in, and then in between there we had an earthquake, and I was getting ready to go up and check the line, and I was up on a knee, and I started feeling dizzy and I was thinking, holy smoke, am I that low on water [dehydrated] that I'm feeling this dizzy? And then I looked around and everybody else was feeling the same thing. So, it was good.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, were you guys pretty much in a set position out there, or positions, that entire time?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah. So, we just blocked in those positions and then we waited for SF [Special Forces] and the Afghan forces to come up and clear the valley.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Did you actually go out and try to catch people?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: So, we were supposed to catch squirts [fleeing enemy personnel] coming out from the valley where the main effort [was] -- from the Shah-i-Kot Valley. And then eventually, 15 days later, they [the SF and Afghan forces] came down through and cleared.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, besides the earthquake, -- and you said you had mortar fire and stuff like that, -- any major battles or anything you guys were engaged in?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Oh, we had a couple of small things, and then we used some snipers and we directed -- we helped direct close air support. So, we had a sniper team attached from the Canadian army that had a couple good shots and we directed some CAS

[Close Air Support]. And we had a couple close-in engagements, but nothing big.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: But you had people to help you with that, as far as close air support.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Right.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: As your time, looking back at Ranger School and your time in 3-75 [3rd Ranger Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment] and all that, did that help prepare you now as a first sergeant --

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Absolutely.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: -- with these guys out there --

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yes.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: -- and making sure they're doing the right thing?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yes.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Can you explain some of that, how maybe a guy or gal without that kind of experience -- did that [Ranger battalion

experience] help you out? Because I've heard people say, I've heard lots of people say, and from those that have been there, that Ranger School is something I'd make every -- if we could do it.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: We can't send everybody to Ranger School, but it would always be good to have a Ranger-qualified guy or gal in every platoon, if you could do it.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Well, I think the biggest thing I learned is from Ranger School that translates is, you got to be comfortable being uncomfortable. And, man, I even take that along, and you got to be able to -- and one of the other things that I'm taking along, not just for being a first sergeant, but you have to be able to lead from a position of discomfort. And, so, being present, going out and checking on the troops, making sure they have what they need, and communicating with them what you know and what you don't know. Sometimes telling them what you don't know is just as important as telling

them what you know.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Instead of them just guessing.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah. And so they make up their own stories. And I think being present -- being present, checking on them. Another thing is, sharing hardships with your soldiers. I think they appreciate that.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Your unit was awarded, I think, it was the Valorous Unit Award for -
-

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: -- [Operation] Anaconda. What did all that involve, or do you know?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I can't remember that.
(Laughter)

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Obviously you guys did a fairly good job over there.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I think so. Well, we were we the first ones on the ground. We were the first ones on the ground, and our company was one of

the last ones to come out.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: That started in March, and then in June of that same year, 2002, you went back to Fort Campbell, and then shortly after that you were at Fort Bliss, Texas, for the sergeants major academy. So, did you come back with your unit?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: No.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Or did you have to come back early?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I came back early. There was some contention there, but I came back early. The brigade sergeant major thought I should come back, so I came back early.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: How did you feel about that?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I was kind of on the fence. I didn't know. Now, I know. I mean, it was probably the right thing to do. I wouldn't do it -- I wouldn't -- if I had been the brigade sergeant major, I would have done it too. I just think it's the right thing to do. He had the foresight to see what was

coming. There are other people that would think and say, ah, he's getting out of a couple months of deployment, but really that didn't get me out of a couple months deployment. That got me back, got me qualified to go be a battalion sergeant major and send me back to a deployment as a battalion sergeant major, a couple times as a brigade sergeant major, as a division -- I didn't get out of much deployment stuff by going back to the academy for -- a couple months early.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: And that's something our leaders struggle with a lot on the enlisted side. On the officer side, my experience is, hey, those guys will get pulled out right in the middle of an operation to go to their professional military education, and sometimes our guys struggle on the enlisted side by doing that.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah, well, so, when it's one chance a year, -- you only get one chance a year to do that, the right thing to do is send them to school.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: When did you find out you were selected [to go to the Sergeants Major Academy]? Was that before the deployment?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: It was in January. Actually, after we had been deployed.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: After you were deployed. Okay.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Was that something you were expecting?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: No. I was planning on getting out.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Really?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah. Actually, I had already had my -- before we deployed, I had a great job lined up for transition. I was going to go do ROTC [Reserve Officers' Training Corps] at Ole MISS [the University of Mississippi].

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: As a civilian?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: No. As a --

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Oh, as a cadet?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: No, as a master sergeant. So, I was going to go do Ole MISS and that would lead into my transition.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Okay, so for a senior military science instructor, and then that would be your last job.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: But then we got deployed. I mean, that --

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Change of plans.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I called HRC [Human Resources Command] and said, hey, I'm deploying. I can't go to Ole MISS, you need to find somebody else.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: How many years had you been in [the Army] at that point?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Eighteen.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Eighteen. So, you're looking at two --

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Two more.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: -- more at ROTC,

and then transfer out. Okay. So, are you glad you stayed in?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Oh, yeah. I love the Army. I wouldn't change anything.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: What was going through your mind back then, that's, I want to get out?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Well, I wasn't -- I was enjoying what I was doing. I didn't know if I wanted to be a battalion sergeant major.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I didn't know if I wanted to do it. So, I wasn't -- I didn't know what I didn't know, and I was okay with it. I didn't know if it was time yet or not, but it all worked out.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, looking back at your time as a first sergeant, both in Charlie Company 3-187, Charlie Company 2-187, any big positive, negative experiences? You had quite a bit of experience there, deployed and not. You think that you learned there good or bad, that you

took kind of in your kit bag for the future?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah. I learned a lot. And I think learning systems and developing programs and expand, I continued to expand my ability to train, formations now, not just individuals and teams, but formations and leader training, and expanding on the basics -- the fundamentals and the basics in security and patrolling will never go. I have never gone away from that. In fact, I would tell, even as a division sergeant major in combat, I would say, if you treat every movement like it's a movement to contact [with the enemy] and every halt like a defense, you'll always be ready. And it's as simple as -- life is that simple. Every movement should be considered a movement to contact. And every halt should be a defense. And you should put yourself in the -- is it easier to fight to cover [protection from enemy fire] or from cover? Then, the issue is out on a patrol. Hey, trooper, what are you doing right here? So, would you -- is it easier to fight to cover or from cover? From cover, Sergeant Major. I

said, well, go get some. There's some right there.

Look around.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Why are you here in the open?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: A shadow can be cover for you. Or, not cover, concealment [protection from enemy observation].

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Concealment.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: You can use a shadow as concealment, but get to cover.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Right.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: And if you can get both, that would be great.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So just stay tactically-minded and operationally-minded.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah. I think that also helped me survive, I think a lot.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Well, we'll talk about the academy [Sergeants Major Academy] a little later on. You graduated from the academy in July of 2003.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: And then you were assigned to the United States Army Garrison at Fort Carson, Colorado, where you served as Operations Sergeant Major. At least, that's where you were initially assigned. And then about five months later, you took over as Command Sergeant Major for 3rd Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment of the 101st [Airborne Division (Air Assault)] in Mosul, Iraq. So, how did that all come about?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I was on the list [of people selected to be Sergeants Major], so I was one of the lucky guys at the academy. At the academy, only about 50 percent of the infantrymen at the academy got selected for sergeant major that year. It was a very low selection rate, I think, for the infantry. And of those, only six got selected for CSM [Command Sergeant Major]. I was fortunate to be selected. I was placed on the CSM list, and at the time, they called it just the CSM list, CSM-D [Command Sergeant Major-Designees].

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Before CSL [Centralized Selection Lists] we had a program, you know. There was a program, and it was one through N.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: The first designee.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah. So, you'd be one on the order merit list based on your date of rank and whatever. I forget what my number was, but it was probably pretty --

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, you knew it was coming.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: -- far down the road. But the way they did it was, the first battalion that came open -- number one guy, do you want that job? No. Then we'll give it to the number two guy. The number one guy, the next job that came, do you want that job? Yes. He'll take that job. Or, if he said no, then he came off the list.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Got two turndowns (inaudible)

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: No, you could only turn down one [CSM job]. But what happened was, the reason we have CSLs, we allowed that thing to become indiscipline. We had a program and a system but we allowed it to become indiscipline. So, I was on the list. I didn't know where I was on the list. I got a call, then I say, is there anything coming up? No, nothing coming up. And then, I sent Sergeant Major Hill, Marvin Hill, the division sergeant major in the 101st at the time, a note, said, hey, this is me, this is where I'm at. I'm at Fort Carson. Is there potentially anything that you have coming open where you could use a battalion sergeant major? And he sent me a note back like the next day and said, yeah, stand by. Don't call HRC. Cease all communications until I get back to you. And so, he got back to me and he said, hey, I need you at the first week of December. So, that was sometime in November, so three weeks later, I went to Mosul. That's kind of how that all worked out.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, what was it

like taking over as the command sergeant major in a combat zone?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Initially, I was concerned with that. I was a little bit worried about it. But after I went there, I think it accelerated my ability to get to know the unit. So, I was able to -- I was totally immersed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. And I got to go out to every company. I got to go out and spend time with each one. I got to learn and meet the leaders and understand who they were, what made them tick, what their goals were, strengths and weaknesses, and then -- so, it really worked out. It really worked out. It was very beneficial to do it like that.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: When you got there, what was your battalion doing? What was their mission and how long had they been over there?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: They had been there for probably about six or seven months.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Okay, so they're well into their [deployment] --

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah, they were well in -- and actually, they had expected to go home, but they weren't going home. So, they're in Mosul, it was a solid unit. They were securing Mosul and developing the Iraqi army, starting to fight the insurgency, starting to really -- which was really starting to get ginned up --

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: getting ramped up there in early 2004?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: -- because that's when we had no armor on our vehicles, but IEDs were there. So, I was really impressed with the innovation and the discipline of the troopers in the unit. I was impressed with that. Troopers are pretty innovative when you allow them to do it.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Did you take over for another battalion sergeant major there, or was that vacant, --

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: -- being filled with a first sergeant?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: No, it was a sergeant major who had some health issues --

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: -- and they had to send him back. So, that's kind of how it worked. It just happened to be the first sergeant. He was a first sergeant or the first sergeant I replaced in the first company in the 101st.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So you knew him.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah. And he was a good guy. He just had health issues at the time and they had to send him back.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Did you have operations sergeant major back then?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I did. Perez. He was good. He was a solid OPS [Operations] sergeant major. He was solid.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: When you got there, every battalion is a little different, but what did you see coming in as a combat unit, or a unit that's deployed, what did you see as your top

priorities upon getting there, and did that change during your time [there]?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Well, really my top priorities have never changed, so one is getting to know the organization. Two is, how are we doing business -- force protection? How are we doing force protection? What are the -- how do we move? How are we -- what are our basic TTPs, how do we operate, how can we do better? So, I don't think NCOs have priorities. I think the commanders have priorities. And I believe the commander's priorities are everybody's priority, and then each of us have different efforts that we focus on --

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: On initiatives or --

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: -- that help support commander's priorities. So, I would look at the organization, focus on soldier discipline, soldier load, and how we operate and focus on that and how can we be better?

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: During that

deployment, was there anything that stands out before you guys came back, how your guys performed, what were you most proud of your guys for doing?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Well, I'll tell you what I was the most proud of came afterwards, because we redeployed. And while we were on leave, -- well, one, we drove from Mosul all the way to Kuwait. We drove from Mosul to Kuwait.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: How far? How long did that take?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I don't know how far that is, but it's a long way. (Laughter)

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Did you have to fight your way down?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: We didn't have to fight-- I mean, we timed it pretty well. We didn't have too many issues. We timed when we were going through a certain area, so we went around Baghdad.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, the vehicles were actually on the road, not being driven down on trucks.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: No.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: You were actually --

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: We were driving --

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: -- driving down.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: -- the vehicles down the road to Kuwait. (Laughter) I'm glad we changed the way we did business.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Hopefully rotating some drivers.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: We did. So, I was proud of the unit, but really, what I was really proud of is, when we were -- we had redeployed and came back, and while we were on leave, we got notified that we were -- our battalion got selected to support cadet summer training. So, we got back in March -- February. About March time frame, we're on leave, and they said, hey, cadet summer training, May, you begin.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: And this was at Fort Lewis at the time?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Get it together. No, it

was at West Point.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Oh, okay. For cadet -- I think they call it Cadet Field Training or something, at West Point.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: So, all the troopers had been deployed for almost a year. They have summer plans. They're going to spend time with their kids, families, and things like that. While they're on their 14 days leave, they find out, hey, the majority of us are going to go support cadet summer training at West Point. And everybody manned up and packed their stuff and we went to West Point. And from the middle of May until August, they were there.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So the guys enjoyed that after they got over the short leave?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: After the -- it was not a happy time, but everybody did a great job. I was proud -- we went down there, they did a great job. It set a foundation for training. So, when you go down there, because you focused on individual training, small unit tactics, those type, it really helped gel

the organization back, get them back in the training mode. But then, while we were at West Point, they said, hey, by the way, we're developing this new concept, BCT [Brigade Combat Team] concept, and all the 3rd Battalions are going to change to RSTAs. What's a RSTA? What are you going to be a CAV [Cavalry] Squadron. Well, what's that mean? Well, you can take --

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Reconnaissance, Surveillance, and I think, Target Acquisition [RSTA].

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: -- target acquisition.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: So, you're going to have a 720-man infantry battalion, and you're going to transition to a 420-soldier task force that includes the FSCs [Forward Support Companies]. You're going to go from having the majority of infantry, so 600 infantrymen in your unit, and you're only going to have 100 left. So, you're going to have to move all those troopers out. You're going to have to receive all the CAV troopers in. This is going to happen in

September. So, we got back from West Point --

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: --in August.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: -- in August, and in September we started transitioning.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Transitioning.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: So, this meant bringing the FSCs in, having the maintenance functions, we had to adjust barracks, we had to work training, we had to build the troops, we had to do lateral transfers with equipment, and, get ready for deployment.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: During this transition, and the Army's done lots of them, but as a sergeant major, what were your primary duties back then, responsibilities in that transition? What did you spend the most time on?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: My biggest concern, and the most important thing to me was, making sure that we had a fair distribution. So, we kept people. The 100 infantrymen that we kept, I wanted to keep some good ones. But, I didn't want to give all of our problems away. So, making sure that we had --

everybody had that we sent troopers to, whatever brigade or battalion they went to, every sergeant major and every leader had a full understanding of who they were getting, what their capabilities [were], and what some of their challenges might be. So, if you were getting a soldier and I said, I can't keep 100 soldiers that have issues, because I could easily do that --

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Right.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: -- I'm going to make sure that those soldiers that I keep are -- so work on all the personnel issues that we had and get those taken care of, as many as possible, that the ones we couldn't take care of, make sure that they had all of those supporting documents and everybody, so it wasn't a surprise. Here's your Schroeder, that has stole some car plates and drove an unregistered, uninsured vehicle with stolen plates.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: He's not deployable.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah. That was one.

And the second thing was, transitioning barracks, because we had to give our barracks -- a bunch of barracks space back. The brigade sergeant major wanted some barracks space back so he could bring the BSB [Brigade Support Battalion] in and house them. And so, there's moving people in and around barracks. So, the emotion is -- that's hard.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Moving the personnel, was this all the units there on the Fort?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yes, they all transitioned on post.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: And we brought all our CAV guys in. So, when they came to the barracks thing, I told the battalion commander, I said, I need one day. Just give me one day. And we moved every person that had a room in the barracks, and this became a battalion effort. They took all their stuff and put it in the yard.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Basic training style.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: And they cleaned all their rooms up and they got inspected by [a] platoon sergeant. And then the first sergeants and I walk through, and then they turn their keys in. Once all the keys were turned in, we issued the keys back out and then everybody helped everybody that lived in the barracks -- if you lived off post, your job was to help soldiers that lived in the barracks get their stuff back in their rooms.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: And how did you determine who to put where? Was it by design?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah. We just did it by unit. We did it by unit, so unit integrity. Company level.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Company level.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: The best way to do it. And in some cases, the companies would -- you kept some platoon integrity in most cases, but we finished. We started at 06 [6:00 a.m.] and we were done before midnight.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: That's great.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: One day. Don't make it, don't bleed me dry. I mean, just one big gush.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: How long was that transition, do you think? How much time did you have to get --?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: It took a couple months to get all the CAV guys in, and here's where we made our mistake. We built a CAV troop at -- so we built an Alpha Troop first. And then we built Bravo Troop. And what we should have done is probably built them up equal together, because when you ended up, it didn't work. Alpha Troop was really strong, they had really good leaders there and they did really well. And Bravo Troop struggled because we did not do a very good job of --

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So you got the first to arrive, so to speak and put him in Alpha --

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: So, for all the leaders and all the -- we built one troop first and then the

second troop, it just did not work out very well. They just never caught up. It took a whole deployment for them to catch up.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, was it numbers based, or just the strength of the folks there and you didn't want to move them later?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: It was personalities and --

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: You didn't have enough time to really transition them again?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah. It was leader-centric.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So now, with the transition, you basically reflagged 3rd Battalion, 502nd, and now you're at 1st Squadron, 75th regiment.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Cav Regiment.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yes.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Then, like you said, then you had to deploy. You deployed to Iraq in October 2005 and you were there for about a year,

until September '06.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Right.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: This time for Operation Iraqi Freedom. So now you're a squadron.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: You have a lot of soldiers, for MOSs you've never really worked with, right?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: And how was that?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: And it's a small unit. And they want to do the same thing that the infantry units do, and they're not resourced to do it the same. So, initially, our mission was, before we left Fort Campbell, it was, you're going to do MSR [Main Supply Route] security on route Tampa and you're going to do area security outside of that. And so you'll have so much battlespace on each side of Tampa to keep Tampa secure and other MSR stuff. And you'll provide a MiTT team [Military Transition Team]. So then it became,

who does what and how do you cut that up? And the commander and I went 'round and 'round on how we were going to do that. And a CAV troop's not a very big troop. They do not have -- like I said, when I was a platoon sergeant, two of anything is not enough.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Right.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: You have to have at least three.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Now, these guys were all dismounted? Was this a light unit? Light CAV?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: So, it was light, but you've got 19 Deltas [Scouts]. So, they're a light CAV, but still.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: With up-armored HMMWVs?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: The size is the size.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Right.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: There's just (inaudible). It doesn't matter. The size is the size, and so it's a small 60-trooper CAV troop. You

just can't do a lot with them. So, we went -- their commander -- and like I said, the commander, battalion commander, and I went 'round and 'round and 'round about how they're going to do this. And so, my recommendation was -- and this is what we did was, we took Charlie Company, the infantry guys, and we gave a squad -- they had two platoons, so we took a platoon from each of them, and we put them in the CAV.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So you took two (inaudible)

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: So we had two troops and we put two infantry platoons in the CAV, and then we built -- we used the company command team from the Charlie Company, the infantry recon, and they had snipers with them, and they had a couple other leaders, and then we brought a few in, and that's what we used for the MiTT team, and then we had two CAV troops.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So you had two plus'd up [augmented with additional personnel] CAV troops.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Two plus'd up CAV
troops.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: And then Charlie
Company became the MiTT.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Now the troops can do
stuff.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Right.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: You can give them more
battlespace, but you can't give them more troops. So,
we gave them more -- and what they did is, we had a
large -- so with them, we also had a large FO.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Forward
Observers?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: A lot of FOs. And so,
we parsed them out. They really became a combined-
arms --

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: You made your
own combined arms team, was that it?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: They did. And they
really did well and they meshed together very well and
that worked out.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Did you and your commander get in any naysaying or pushing back from brigade on your own task organizing your own folks?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I don't remember.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: This is at transition, the Army's doing their modular force and brigade.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I don't think they knew how to do it.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, we're all learning at the same time.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I don't think they had time to be worried about what we were doing because they had bigger --

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: bigger fish to fry.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: -- bigger things going on. They just wanted us to do what we were doing and do it good.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Did your squadron's mission over there change or was it pretty

much steady state?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Pretty much the same type stuff, but our battlespace really expanded quite a bit, and we did -- we did a lot and it was very good. I was really proud of our troopers, because they really knew -- they really knew their battlespace. They really knew that the people, the Iraqi people, they knew the community. I mean, the Iraqi army embraced them. So, we had a guy named Staff Sergeant Smith, who would go out to this -- I mean, he knew everybody in their villages that they would cover down on, and Smith was a -- he was a -- he understood counter insurgency operations. He knew every person in that town. He had a book and he knew everybody in that town, good, bad, indifferent. He knew the cousins of the cousins and he knew --

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Is this just his passion?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: He just figured that stuff out. And then he would see kids -- and he would see kids and he would say, ah, you look like a size

11, or whatever, size 7 shoe, and he'd go in the back of his truck and give them a pair of shoes or hat, coats, and they had family members sending winter clothes and they would use those, put them in the back of their vehicles. But they also rolled people up too. So, where other organizations were getting blown up, we had people calling in and giving tips. We had a guy that was an informant, and they called him Digger. And they called him Digger because he put in IEDs [Improvised Explosive Devices].

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Hmm.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: And then he would put IEDs in and he would call our troop up that had that area, and would say, hey, I put an IED. I just want to let you know I put an IED on this road at this time and this is how it's marked.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Wow.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Go find it. But he had to put them in because --

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: They were threatening his family.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: -- Al Qaeda said, hey, if you don't put these damn things in, we're going to kill you and your family.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: So, you put them in. And so he would put them in. And so, we would get tips and we would roll up caches that were, I mean, these huge caches with like 155-gallon drums buried into orchards with concrete -- so, you've seen the curbs that are pieces of curb that are already projectile formed in the curb with the blasting caps sticking out with our water bottles our Gatorade bottles cut off, where all they had to do is take the the Gatorade bottle, cut in half, set in concrete, so all they have to do is take the orange cap off the Gatorade bottle and prime the fuse and put it in the curb and they were good to go. And they'd be rolling up things like that, but some of the times I was -- one day I was on patrol and I was really proud of this -- I would just roll out with my guys and check what our people were doing. And I went out on Tampa [Route

Tampa] and I turned right, and I am going up the road and I see some of our troopers trying to push start --

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Somebody's car?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: -- somebody's car. So, Iraqi, just some family's car had broken down and they were trying to help them push start it. They are helping him push start it, and I go a little bit further up the road, and I got one of our Humvees is towing an Iraqi car home, and they are trying to get them home before their curfew.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: And so, those were the types of things that those guys did, and they also had blown up caches and they also, when there was a threat, they would --

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: And once, Sergeant Smith, I think you said his name was, I am sure other guys took his example --

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Absolutely

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: -- and formed the greater team.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: When everybody was rolling fast, we rolled slow. So, when everybody thought speed was their friend, and they were going to drive as fast as they could, they would get blown up, lose a wheel, and they would ride off into a canal, or the road vehicle would roll three or four times. Our vehicles would be rolling 25 miles an hour, was our top speed that we would --

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So everybody earned the respect and trust of the people.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah. We were going down the road but the other thing was when an IED blew a wheel off, we would just roll to a stop. But if you are going 50 miles an hour, and the wheel blows off, and you lose control of the vehicle, that thing is going to flip three or four times. So, we developed TTPs that worked, that's when we said, hey, you want some culture awareness training, here is some culture awareness for you. Hey, you treat people right, it doesn't matter where they are from, what their language is, what their culture is, I mean -- it's

just treating people right. So, treat people right.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: And then of course, your NCOs would -- this would be now in their kitbag for later, when they are in charge of large units, hopefully. So, Sergeant Major, in looking back at your time as the Command Sergeant Major of 3-502 [Infantry] and 1-75 CAV, any particular significant challenges over that time that you had overcome during that time, things that maybe influenced --things that influenced you later on, for later positions in your career, positively or negatively?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I would say the importance of holding leaders accountable. It is really important to hold leaders accountable, at all levels. And, people like to know where they stand. Even if they don't have a good standing, they appreciate being told, hey, check it out First Sergeant, you are really not doing that good. Everybody needs that feedback, and you don't make it personal. It's got to be professional.

And I had a first Sergeant that just wasn't

doing well, and I was getting ready to go. I had to go to the Brigade Sergeant Major and say hey, Sergeant Major, is it either this First Sergeant or me. One of us has to leave this battalion. But one of us has got to go. It's not going to be good for either one of us if we stay together. In fact, the battalion commander then asked me one day and said, hey, Sergeant Major, do you think you are being little bit hard on First Sergeant? And I said, sir, if I hit that dude across the head by 4x4, that would not be hard enough. But he wasn't bad a guy.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: He just wasn't capable or wasn't willing to --

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I think he wasn't willing or he couldn't see himself, and I worked -- worked with him and talked to him and counseled him. And finally, so the battalion, the Brigade Sergeant Major moved him to another -- worked with another Brigade Sergeant Major, moved him to another Brigade, and he went in and did some OPS [Operations] time, and then he went back to a company and did some First Sergeant

time again. And he came back to me, a year or so later, and said, hey, I want to thank you for --

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Sometimes you had to put a guy on the bench.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: -- for taking me out because you made me realize I wasn't as good as I thought I was. And he became a Sergeant Major later. So, you do not have to -- I mean, you don't have to ruin somebody to have an effect. I told people it's like using the ammunition that is required to get the job done. If it only requires a counseling or an admonishment, use that. If you need a hellfire missile, I mean, reserve those for when you really need them. But you don't have to do that.

And then the other thing that I took away from there is -- and it's when I tried to tell leaders is, there is no place that you go that there is somebody that doesn't know who you are. There is nowhere that you are going to go, whether it's in your community or somewhere where somebody doesn't know who you are. You might not realize it but there's people,

Sergeant Major, Commander, that know who you are or what you are. So, don't do anything that you are not proud of. Conduct yourself appropriately. Those are some --

I think the other thing at the battalion level is -- so, a couple of things that I take away is training, doing leader training prior to a training event, narrows the baselines. You were talking about baselines earlier. It narrows the baseline and it helps everybody understand what we are trying to achieve because once you leave the motor pool, that ball's hit. That training ball is hit. You are going to be either foul or fair. So, leader training, narrows the baselines.

And then the other thing is for all the Sergeant Majors -- so, we rely on Operations Sergeant Majors to do a lot but if you are disappointed in how an event or a ceremony goes, if you are a Command Sergeant Major, look in the mirror. That's your responsibility. And you have to be able to communicate what you want. And, I think, Marvin Hill taught me it's about the, it's about the colors and the music. If you get those two

things right, you are going to have most of it right. So, if we took a trooper and he showed up to an in-ranks inspection, and he had - he or she had their unit citations, or their unit awards, and they had black marks on it from the Brasso [brass cleaner] going across there or they had a rip in one oak leaf cluster, we would scar him up or her. But when we take our colors out on the daggone ugh. And we take our colors out, and we display them in the ceremony, and they are all wrinkled up, nobody says anything. But we should say something.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Yes.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Because you are the keeper of the colors, Sergeant Major. And so, they should be pressed and ready to go. So, I think we forget about that stuff because we are -- so, those are a couple of things I took away. Leader training narrows the baselines and hey, ceremonies, colors, and music. Don't mess those two things up.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Okay. Sergeant Major, we are going to transition now to your Brigade

time. So, in November 2006, you were still at Fort Campbell and then you were assigned to 2nd Brigade, 101st [Airborne Division (Air Assault)] where you moved up to Brigade Command Sergeant Major for about the next three plus years. So, when did you find out that you were being selected for Brigade?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Right before I went in there.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Right before you went in [laughing].

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I think that's when I found out right after I came back too, so. I can't remember when I came back.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: September of '06, so, a few months later. Yeah. Two or three months later.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: About two weeks before I went in there, I found that I was going to do that. And we did things differently back then. I mean, it was a -- you go up and interview with the Division Commander, and he supports the Brigade Commander's --

what he wants. So, it was just different back then.

But I'll tell you, that was the hardest transition from going -- harder transition than any that I had in the past going from Battalion to Brigade.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: And why is that?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Because that's the first time I was responsible for an organization that I realized I did not feel that I knew everything that was going on. I mean, at the Battalion level, there was probably some things that were happening that I didn't know about and probably some. But I had a pretty good idea and understanding of what was going on in the Battalion. I was pretty certain I knew everything that was going on in the Company when I was a First Sergeant. But at the Brigade level, it was just very large and a lot of things happening. So, that's the first time I really had a - that was a leap. That was big.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, I am sure you learned as you went. So, as far as primary

duties, responsibilities -- in every job -- every position has them and they're different but what did you think your primary duties, responsibilities should have been as a Brigade Sergeant Major and then what did you find out, what did you actually experience, what did they become?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I don't think they changed. I just think the scale changed.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: But my duties and responsibilities -- I don't believe my duties and responsibilities ever changed. I just think the scale of those changed and I think, you just had to work differently to be able to reach an appropriate end state. I think, it was a big brigade. I thought uniformity of systems was very important. And so, making sure systems were uniform across, so, we didn't have to -- and there wasn't a lot of, it wasn't personality-based. It was systems-based application.

The other thing I learned there was exceptions to policy. Everybody wants to put in for

exceptions to policy because they don't like what the policy looks.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Each Battalion?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah. They all try to do different things. And so, they would try to make with -- so, I believe that exceptions to policy are for exceptional people or exceptional circumstances. And that's the way I would always measure it -- so, why is this exception to policy here? What are we trying to achieve? Why is this an exceptional circumstance? Or why is this person exceptional?

And then, training, and leader development, and counselling. Leading leaders and then, counselling. Like I said before, leaders like to know where they stand. I would bring the Battalion Sergeant Majors in quarterly. And I would sit down and I then would just say --

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: You are number one, you are number two.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I told them that. One through six. You are one, you are best. You are

number six, these are the things you need to do.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: As a group, you did this?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Not as a group. I would bring them in one at a time. I would bring them in and -- I actually had one who was proud of his number.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: And he was number one?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: He was certainly not number one. At his retirement ceremony, he stood up, he mentioned, and he said, hey, Sergeant Major Schroeder brought me in one time for my counselling, and he told me I was a five or the sixth in the Brigade, and heck, I was just proud to have a number. I was just proud to have a number. I was proud. I mean people -- and you don't have to make it personal. And, sometimes you are not number one because number one is better than you. But that doesn't mean you are not good. That just means -- there is always going to be somebody that is better. It's okay. Where are you and what do you need to do to get better? And, I

think, that was really good.

I really enjoyed being a Brigade Sergeant Major. I think that was a great job. That was not a job that I didn't enjoy though.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: What was it like, you know, this was probably the first time you had Sergeant Majors under you or Sergeants Major under you, so --

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Right.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: -- was that a challenge or was that easy for you?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: No. It was easy because I always considered myself a peer leader. See because, I think, sometimes we forget what our role is. Some of us forget what our role is and where we are, what our purpose is. And I just considered myself a peer leader. Yeah, I am the Brigade Sergeant Major, and guess what, I am the Brigade Sergeant Major. I didn't have to throw down, I am the Brigade Sergeant Major card down. So, hey, check it out, this is what is going on and this is where we need help.

But because, you know what, in the end, that Battalion Sergeant Major answers to his Commander. That's who they answer to. They don't answer to me. But they also know that I can influence things for them and their organization. As long as you have communication, I had zero issues. Yeah. I didn't have an issue with it. I enjoyed it.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, you started there in November 2006 and then, just about a year later you deployed -- your Brigade deployed to Iraq again for Operation Iraqi Freedom. This was 07-09, so kind of the tail end of the surge, I think about that time.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: What was your Brigade's mission once you guys got over there?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah. So, we went -- when we went to Iraq, and our mission was to defeat Al-Qaeda, and build Iraqi army capacity in north-west Baghdad. So, yeah it was during the surge, and the unit before us had lost a lot of troopers because they were there at the beginning and through the beginning of the

surge, and we got, kind of, in the middle to the tail end of the surge. But we were also there for 14 months. Really wish I would have had gone in and taken pictures of different places of when we got there and then when we left.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Transition and progress, you mean?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Oh, it was huge. I mean, you can see progress, and we had great troopers, and great leaders, and it was awesome.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Did your unit change configuration at all once you got over there or did you stay the same?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: All Brigade, all together. Actually, we had one Brigade -- we had one Battalion that we had to cut to Multi-National Division Central. So one Battalion had got cut away. Let's see. That's a story.

But anyway. Yeah, that's what we did and I focused on battlefield circulation, standards, what, how, where. Any large IED attack or any type of attack

that took place that was out of the ordinary, I would go to that location, look at it, and see how it was executed, what the TTPs the enemy used, and see how we could counter those TTPs, and what are the things we could put in place to mitigate those type things. And I would come back and talk to the Commander, but also talk to the staff. And a lot of times I found that, just talking to the staff or talking to a subordinate Commander, and we would put resources against some efforts to make things better.

JSS [Joint Security Station] force protection, there were a lot of negligent discharges [of weapons] and I think, with the culture that was pervasive in the Division at the time. We had troopers and leaders that were more afraid of negligent discharges than they were of actions -- enemy actions. I am not a big fan of Amber [weapons] status.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Amber is where you have a round in the chamber.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: No. No round in the chambers.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Oh, that's Red, I am sorry.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Ammunition in the magazine.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I have never been trained to go to Amber status. So, we are teaching -- we are having people do things they're not trained to do in combat. And at the same time, we just changed our manuals to the joint manuals for our 240 [M240 machine gun]. So loading procedures for the 240 and then 249 [M249 Squad Automatic Weapon], which weapons systems operate exactly the same.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, they [weapons in an Amber status] weren't ready to fire.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Loading procedures were different.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: But then, so in Amber status, your guys could be a half step behind the enemy because they [their weapons] are not locked and loaded.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Right.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: But you also have a false sense of security when you don't have -- when you think oh, there is no round in chamber, nothing can happen. I am safe, maybe we should -- I am of the opinion we should teach people to be competent and that will give them confidence. If we train our troopers to be competent, leaders will be confident in their ability to take care of their weapon systems. We didn't.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, we never do that. Safety instead.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: We try to air on the side of safety instead of training.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Did that hurt your guys in any way? Or is it just we need to trust..?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah. You got to trust people but you got to train them.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Right.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: And then hold people accountable appropriately. So, some of the TTPs, RKG-3

grenades and EFPs [Explosively Formed Penetrators], I mean, we changed movement techniques. The Army adopted some of the things that we were doing to combat RKG-3 attacks.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: What's RKG-3?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: RKG-3 is a handheld employed shape charge. So, it has a little drag chute on it. It gets hand thrown and it's a -- yeah, it's like a shaped charge and it penetrates. It's the first thing that penetrates -- it would penetrate our Huskies [common term for a vehicle with a mine detection and route clearance system]. It's one of the first weapons to penetrate one of our Huskies. So, they would usually -- the enemy would usually attack the last vehicle in a patrol. So, instead of having the last vehicle pointing [orienting its crew's weapons systems] to the rear we would have the next to the last vehicle pointing to the rear. And the vehicle that was in the rear, we would have them orient in the direction of most likely area of attack, so -- where they would expect somebody to attack the patrol. And so, the next to the last truck would be

oriented to the six o'clock covering the flanks of the trail vehicle.

And then, for the EFPs, one of the things we did was -- they [the enemy] would set the EFPs on the side of the road, so the explosively charged projectile would shape, and it would have the opportunity to shape, and penetrate, and the way they aimed it. So, one of the things we did was we started having the lead vehicle get as far left as possible and orient to the right, looking down, looking for EFPs in the hope that -- so, the lead truck which we shifted all the way to the far left of the road, as far over from center as possible, and it would be oriented to the right looking for the EFPs. And the second vehicle in the order of movement would be hugging the curb -- as close as it could be to the curb. And that way, if the lead truck, if it activated an EFP -- if an EFP got put off, the possibility of the aim would go over the front of the truck. And then -- or miss the truck or be high. So the point -- the truck was on the second -- the attack was on the second vehicle, the hope would be, it would

hit the front of the truck, or it would not form totally and it would just hit the truck.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: It's too close.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: And just be too close for it to be effective. And then also, we would think that enemy would now have to make a choice -- which vehicle are we going to attack or just leave them alone and confront others-- so, that was a technique that we developed.

Another thing we developed was, when we first got over there is, we had all these fighting positions as they expanded the JSSs [Joint Security Stations] but no mounts were there for our machine guns. So, we got an innovative specialist welder and we started building machine gun mounts. And, we were trying to make them as fast as we could because we had all kinds of things that were less than perfect for mounting the machine guns and some of the towers that we had. So, that was another innovation that we used with our troopers.

So, one of the things that I took away from that deployment and being the Brigade Sergeant Major, is

sometimes, the enemy is better than us and we lose troopers. But when I would really get disappointed was when we were not as good as we should have been. And we had troopers getting injured, wounded, or killed. And that -- I would take that really personally when those type of things would happen.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, you guys were over there about 14 months you said. How was your transition with your successor and the guys that came in on in the tail end of your deployment?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I think it went well. We really tried to -- at any time that we did a transition, either coming in or going out, we tried to really prepare the other individuals who were coming in, so that they are successful. And those transitions are always challenging. And, sometimes, they are easier. You try not to judge but it's hard not to be judgmental. The problem is with that, you don't know what the state of things were. The conditions were totally different.

So, when we came in, there were very few

stores open. There were very few shops open. There was sewage in the streets. Drain sewage running in the streets. When we left there was no more sewage in the streets. If there was a point of sewage, it would be something that just popped up and it could be corrected quickly.

Markets were open, there were road side shops open in Baghdad where people were eating in the evening. The confidence of the Iraqi people -- they were out. When we first got there, it was just -- it was like a ghost town. Every place we went around Baghdad was a ghost town. And in 14 months, we saw so much progress. So, it's hard for people to -- they come in and they will see bad things. But it's hard for them to put it in context to what it was -- yeah, from what it was.

And you want them to come in and be a little bit skeptical. You want people to come in and see things for what they are, and you want them to be a little bit skeptical because we can get better.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Right.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Because, yeah you are

just slowing your growth. So, it's good for them to come in, see what's happening and get familiar with the area, understand it, where we have come from, what we are doing and why we are doing it. So, they can come in with their plan and execute it. So, I was happy with that.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, in November 2008 you guys re-deployed to Fort Campbell or you continued to serve as the Brigade Sergeant Major for about another year or so. Looking back at your time -- your entire time as Brigade Commander Sergeant Major, what were some of the things deployment or otherwise that you, kind of, took forward with you? Things you put in your kit bag that you can pass on to fellow Sergeants Major, or use yourself in your future assignments?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah. So, I covered a couple of those earlier as far as -- it is big organization and standardizing, having uniform systems and exceptions to policy. One of the other things I did was work hard with their schools program. Making sure

people got to school when they were supposed to go to school. One of the things I did is, we had a -- every three weeks, I would have a PT [physical training] session with anybody that was going to school next month -- over the next month. Anybody, any school, no matter what it was.

And really, it wasn't designed for the PT session as much as it was to get my schools' NCO and the ops Sergeant Major having them get access to the soldiers that were going to go to school. Because when the schools' NCO asks First Sergeants from across the Brigade to get their troopers us to get them together, those First Sergeants and the Battalion Sergeant Majors are not as responsive to the schools' NCO or even the Brigade Ops Sergeant Major as they are to the Command Sergeant Major. So, I just said, hey, I am doing PT with this group and here's the people that are coming. Have them there because they knew if they weren't there, that First Sergeant was going to be doing PT with me the next day.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: All right.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: --And so, what I did was-- we did a little run just to -- test [it] out to make sure nobody is on profile [written orders by a doctor or physician's assistant not do specific physical activities] --that's not supposed to be. Somebody that is going to school, and shouldn't be going to school, and then we come back and do two minutes of push-ups, two minutes of sit-ups, and I can look at their PTs [physical training uniform], and if they looked like they need to tape them [use measuring tape to determine a person's body fat percentage], I had a medical NCO there, and somebody there was taping them. But I didn't make that -- I didn't tell them they couldn't go to school, I just said hey, Battalion Sergeant Majors, be aware, this is what we did today, these were the results. You might want to test them out before you send them to school. I am not going to not allow them to go to school. I mean, that's on you. If they come back [from school] and they shouldn't have been to school, then we are going to have a discussion.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Right.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: The other thing that we did that I really enjoyed was --I have always been huge on reception and integration. We have always done a terrible job at sponsorship. That's one of the things I worked on at FORSCOM [Forces Command]. We have never

been good at sponsorship. As a Battalion Sergeant Major, we started getting email addresses and we had everybody had the Army AKO [Army Knowledge Online] email addresses. Once we got those -- when I was a Battalion Sergeant Major -- I would send a note to anybody that was --any Staff Sergeant or above levels coming to me. As a Brigade Sergeant Major, any Sergeant First Class or above that was coming, I would send them an email, at least try to get them an email, to communicate with them. But one of the things I did was every week, when I was in the rear [not deployed at the time] and if I wasn't there, one of the other Sergeant Majors would cover down, or someone would cover down. I would go to the replacement -- and do PT, at the replacement detachment. I did that every week on a Tuesday, and I would go down there, and do PT with anybody that was at the replacement detachment.

SGM WATERHOUSE: And this was the Division replacement?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yes. So, I was the Brigade Sergeant Major, but we were tasked to have

people down there on BMM [Borrowed Military Manpower] down there and so, I would go down there and do PT with anybody - and, that was Lieutenant Colonel and below. And if you were a field-grade officer and you didn't feel like you needed to go, you needed to talk to the Deputy Commander or the XO. And so, nobody -- the incoming officers did not want to talk to those guys on those terms. So, everybody would do PT with me. So, we would do PT but what was the most important thing was not just the PT, but I would talk to them. Hey, this is where we have been, this is where we are, this is where we are going, this is what's happening. But I also brought somebody from the S1 [Personnel] shop with me. And we had a roster, and on that roster, was [each person's] name, MOS, and what unit they were going to. Whether that had a profile, no profile --

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, this was after they knew what Brigade they were going to?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: They knew what unit because they were already assigned to a battalion.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: And so, we came down there and they knew the Brigade because they were coming to 2nd Brigade. They were doing PT with me. But the S1 had an NCO that would come down with me and we had this roster -- we had all their names, MOS, grade, profile, no profile. We would ask them, did they need a spot in the barracks? Did they need permissive TDY [Temporary Duty]? Did they come in on enlistment bonus? And we had all that filled out and what we did is we tabbed that and by the end of the day, the S1 would send that to me. I would send that down to the Battalions, so they could get that to the companies. So, everybody knew who they were getting.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Kind of a read-ahead?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: So, that was something that we did well. And the other thing that we put together was a -- we put a thing called the Strike Academy. And it was a two-day introduction to the Brigade. So, once they got there, we did that once a month. So, by the time they arrived in the month, I had

a - actually, my EO [Equal Opportunity] NCO put that together, and he was staff member, and that was one of his things that he did. He put that together and we had S1 came -- well, the Commander and myself came and talked to them. The S3 did a brief to them, what was going on. The S1 came in, the FRSA [Family Readiness Support Assistants] came in, the Chaplain came in, we gave them the history of the unit.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: It's almost like head start program.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah. So, it was a two-day thing and everybody that came to Brigade went through it -- orientation. So, this is our standards and this is what we do. It started with PT every day.

So, that was important. I thought that was really important and then, one of the things I took away from there -- I had done it a while but really, the importance of recognizing excellence. I think, too many times we focus on discipline. We need to discipline soldiers. They need to be disciplined. But too many times we do not take the opportunities that we should to

recognize excellence in our soldiers. And so, we had -- we put these things together and, we used to have these things called pay day activities, we would do award ceremonies, Brigade and Battalion award ceremonies. We started doing a -- on a routine basis we would do recognizing excellence.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Its own event.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: As its own event in the organization. So, those were the couple of things that I took away from there.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major in February 2010, you were moved from Brigade up to the 101st Airborne Division at Fort Campbell where you served as a Division Command Sergeant Major and you did that for about two and a half years. So, when did you find out you were moving up to Division? How long?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Few weeks before -- so I found out I was being considered for, right before Christmas. But I did not find out about it -- that I was selected until a few weeks before I went and took responsibility.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Two-week notice.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Probably two or three weeks, but I was on post, so it wasn't that far of a move.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Right.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: We did things differently back then.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Do you go to some panel or anything, or to some interview [for the Division Command Sergeant Major position]?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I went on an interview with the Division Commander.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, the Division Sergeant Major told you, I need you to come see the boss?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: The SGS [Secretary of the General Staff] or the CG's [Command General's] aide said, are you available for an interview?

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, the Division Sergeant Major didn't call you? Did you change that when you got in to position?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: It was a unique situation at that time.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: You think they would have given a little more than a two weeks' notice. Especially if he -- whoever your replacement was --

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Well, I know I was interviewing in December.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: And then when I got picked, I didn't get --

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Yeah, a couple of months. Didn't know when your interview was.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah. Seemed like forever though to find out. It was forever.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, speaking of your predecessor, was he there when you transitioned?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: He was but he was working on his transition at the time.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Okay. So, did it go so smooth or --?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: It was okay. That was an

easy -- actually that was an easy transition for me because I already had been on, I mean --

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: You probably saw him quite a bit.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Oh, I had seen him a bit. I had already been in the Division, I had been on the installation as a battalion and a brigade sergeant major...

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: You probably knew some of the staff already.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I probably knew, yeah. I knew almost everybody and everybody --

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, you had a working relationship already.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah. It was easy. It was an easy change -- transition.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: I am using the word priorities, but what kind of issues or whatever -- I guess, priorities is okay. What kind of things did you setup -- not policies -- what kind of things did you hone in on when you first took over? I know you had a,

like in any position, you have to, kind of, assess what you have. Within that transition, what did you see?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: So, it's hard to set things up because at the time, all the Brigades were coming and going. And on deployment and coming back in different cycles. So, that was a little challenging. And it wasn't long from the time I got selected until we deployed. So, really what was important was understanding your organization, understanding the Division, trying to understand where I was going to go in Afghanistan because I hadn't been to Afghanistan since my first deployment in 2001, 2002 -- and so things had changed quite a bit. Also, I had to understand that, and then getting a handle on the installation, and really the post, the Garrison Sergeant Major, and selecting a rear-detachment team. And giving them some priorities and some things to keep things going. Those were the big things that I wanted to -- I wasn't going to get any initiatives across the line.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Because you only had about four months before -- in position, now you are

going to Afghanistan.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: So, I wasn't going to get anything done. I was going to figure things out and then, have an understanding of where we were going and what we were going to do.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, when you got a Division now -- not only were you the Division Sergeant Major but you also were the combined Joint Task Force 101 Commander Sergeant Major. Can you talk about the Transfer of Authority and Handover of Responsibility there? This was only, like, what six months in the job and now you get two big responsibilities. How did you balance those two or was it more one job?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: It was really just one job, it was just bigger.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: And so, the transition went really well. I had to replace Sergeant Major Capel and we replaced the 82nd [Airborne Division] at the time. And Sergeant Major Capel had been in and out of Afghanistan, like he had been in and out of Afghanistan

several times. And so, he was really helpful in helping me understand the battle space, and what he had been trying to do, and what priorities he had, and what they were trying to do.

And I think, the biggest thing for me was trying to understand the geography - the frontline situation, the enemy situation. How things were being done, and then getting out there, and figuring out how I can contribute. But really, that was a great deployment. BAF [Bagram Airfield], we were responsible for Bagram Airfield which we had about 30,000 people on Bagram at the time and all the craziness that goes on --

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: It's a small city in itself.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: And then, we also had seven brigades -- one French brigade, a Polish brigade, and five American brigades at the time. And so, of those five American brigades, we had 1st Brigade, 101st [Airborne Division (Air Assault)], 3rd Brigade, 101st, 4th Brigade, 101st, and then, 2nd Brigade 101st, the Brigade I had come from was down in RC [Regional

Command] South. So, they were there at the same time. We had our Sustainment Brigade from the 101st at Bagram, and both the aviation Brigades transitioned, and came in through RC South at the same time.

So, I had to go down there and do battle field circulation with 101st troopers. So, at one time in Afghanistan, during the Division's -- I was deployed as the Division Sergeant Major to General Campbell, at one point, we had 17,000 soldiers from the 101st in Afghanistan. So, I felt like a real Division Sergeant Major of my Division, our Division, being deployed at the same time, and we had other organizations too that came through.

And so, I thought that was really good. And I just wanted to look to see how we were doing business, where troops needed help and focused on RSOI [Reception, Integration, Onward Movement, and Integration] a lot, so training. And I saw some things that could be changed and tried to work on that. I really focused on BAF force protection and security, FOB [Forward Operating Base] security. And I spent a lot of time -- I spent

less time with the Division Commander -- he and I had a great relationship. He and I still have a great relationship, but I spent less time with him than I spent with the Deputy Commanders. I spent more time with the DCG-O and S [Deputy Command General-Operations and Deputy Commanding General-Support], than I did with the Division Commander.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, did you get to go out to see the troops?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: We went to a lot of city operations with the troops. I spent time with the S on maintenance and soldier programs and taking care of troopers. Spent time with them. And one of the things I struggled with, as a Division Sergeant Major, was -- what meetings do I go to? I was invited to all meetings but if I went to all meetings, I would never get out to see troopers. So, trying to work with the -- develop a relationship with the Chief of Staff, and the DCGs, and maybe trying a couple of meetings and saying, hmm, I don't need to go to that [meeting] again. If you want to, try. Sometimes I would just say, hey, do you think

this will be a valuable meeting for me to go to? That's when I learned and realized -- I probably already knew it, but that's when I realized, hey, the staff does not want the Sergeant Major at a decision briefing. It's too late.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: It's too late, kind of thing.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: We can't influence anything at the decision table -- need not come. Where they need you is course of action development.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: But the CG is not up there. He is not there. It's usually the Chief of Staff with the 3 [S3; Operations Officer] and some others. That's where I would go. So a lot of times, by doing that and being there I would be able to influence operations greater and more and be able to influence more by not being with the CG than being with the CG. And I could still communicate with them. And that's when I also found, and the staff also found -- the primaries, found that they could get access to the CG by

coming to me. Because they knew I had a relationship that I could just walk in the office and ask him things. And I would have also insights on what he was thinking and other things, and I could tell them, or I would say, I don't know, let me check, and I will get back to you in a couple of days. And I would just, hey sir, what do you think about this -- okay.

And so, then they wouldn't have to wait to go through the Chief [of Staff] to get to the O [DCG-O] to get to the CG. They could come to me.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, they kind of gave you -- what their thoughts were, hopefully they wouldn't skip you.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Well, I wasn't worried about that. If they think you are valuable, they are not going to skip you. So, that was good. So, what meetings to go through, well, it wasn't the decision briefing. I could just say in passing, hey sir, you've see the read ahead, which course of action do you want to go with?

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Giving [him] your

opinion?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: No. Sometimes I would give him my -- hey, I was looking at this, we were looking through this, and, here is some recommendations that I made. Dada,dada,da. They certainly didn't include those in here.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: And this was before the decision brief? Did your Ops [Operations] Sergeant Major, kind of, keep you abreast of when those were happening?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah. And I also worked with the Chief -- the Chief and I had a great relationship. In fact -- so, this is what I would tell nominative Sergeant Majors [Sergeants Major who work for General Officers] too. We have seen the terms of reference -- terms of reference is a document where the Commander has contracted all of his subordinates, his staff leaders--. Deputy Commander for Operations, you are responsible for --.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, everyone is

on the same page.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: The CG is responsible for this, the Deputy Commander for Operations is responsible for this, Deputy Commander for Support is responsible for this, and typically, you will see the Sergeant Major is responsible for these things. But I don't think that should be -- the Sergeant Major should be a column to itself. It should go across. Because a lot of the things that the Sergeant Major focuses on cuts across the Commanders' realm, the DCG-Os' realm when it comes to training and operations, and the DCG-Ss' realm as it comes to sustainment, maintenance, care, welfare of the troops, those type things.

And then, looking at those, and highlighting those for each one of them, and the Chief of Staff, and SGS, what they do, and sit down with each one of them, and say, okay I see this is what you do, and this is what I am interested in. These are the things where I can help you. And making sure you have those conversations.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Was there any

challenges or something which you hadn't experienced before working with the other nations' forces there in your Task Force?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah. I just don't care about senior NCOs.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Really.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah. I find them relatively interesting -- certain things relatively interesting, but you have limited influence on them. But I also learned about the Poles, and I learned about the French, and I learned they had external pressures on them that the U.S. didn't have. They had incredible amount of political pressure on them from their leadership back at home. That caused them to have caveats and different things.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: --that did not necessarily go with the plan that --

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Well, that's one and then two, they just don't know the value -- they didn't know the value and they didn't know how to leverage what an NCO is. I mean, they didn't understand it. So, I would

go out and spend time with them, but I didn't have the ability to influence them that much. So, I would go spend time with them sometimes, and see what I could do, and then try to influence them either directly or indirectly. And then I would go to places where I thought I could have the greatest benefit.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Did you talk to their Commanders at all maybe --?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Sometimes.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: That wouldn't necessarily help?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah. Not necessarily.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Because it's a different culture, I guess.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: It's a different culture. I really put focus on things like force protection, insider threat, transitioning of units. One of things that we really worked hard on and did it -- a couple of times really well. We put together a training program down at the FOB level; at the Brigade level. So, instead of doing a BAF, we did the RSOI on the larger

FOBs. And we put it down there, so it was more tailored to the area that they were going in, and so the TTPs that they were going to be seeing, and so we were able to do that.

And then spending time with troopers. I mean, spending time on the ground with troopers to see what they were doing and see what they were going through and so, be able to bring that back to the staff and communicate that.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Did you get to get out as much as you wanted to?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I got out as much and more than I wanted to. And it was awesome. I had incredible flexibility, I got around a lot and really, I can have the Brigade Commanders, the Battalion Commanders, their Sergeants Major, and the Company Commanders -- they were all very happy to see me, and my thought was, hey, always leave more than you take. You got to come in, and you got to see what's going on, and what's happening but you also have to know -- where can I help you? Or what do you need help with, what's going

on here? That's where I came up with the story. You know the two best things about deployed? A lot of people come back and say, well, you get extra pay. Yeah, you get extra pay. You have folks on a war-time mission. Yeah, you have folks on a war-time mission. That's good.

Hey, the two best things about being deployed is banana waffle breakfast and pecan pie every other meal. So, I was hoping to come out at an outpost, only about 16 troopers on this OP [Observation Post], and we are doing black-light or red-light dinner going through the line, popping heat meals, and going through the line, and I get to the end and reaching in the pecan pie box, and there is only one piece of pecan pie left. And I said, damn. And so, one of the troopers said, what's wrong, Sergeant Major? And I said, well, there is only one piece of pecan pie left. And he said, go ahead and take it. I said, not a chance. He said, no, no, no, go ahead and take it. I said, no I am not taking it. I am not coming up here and spending one night up here with you all. And when I go away and you all say, yeah, the

Division Sergeant Major came in and took our last piece of pecan pie. That is not going to happen.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: That's what they were going to remember you by. Where was this? Korangal?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: It was up in the Korangal valley, I can't remember which outpost it was. It was a small outpost. Because we had about 200 of them at the time. And so, trooper comes back over and says, hey, Sergeant Major, here you go. Here is a whole box of it. I said, oh, you got a whole box. And so, they said, yeah. I said, okay. Give me one of them -- give me one of the pieces of pecan pie. So, what I told people is, always leave more than you take.

And so, one of the things I told our senior Sergeant Majors from the Academy, or whether they are going through ELC [Executive Leader Course], or what we are going to call now, the nominative leader course. Tell them, hey -- I told that story -- I said, hey, always leave more than you take, and when you leave the Army, you leave your legacy. And your legacy is the

troopers that you leave behind. And what you take is your personal and your professional reputation. Don't do anything to put those two at risk. And so, always leave more than you take, I got those.

One of the other things I got out of there while we were deployed, we worked on developing a marksmanship course that was similar to that course I went to when I was a Squad Leader. And we put one together at the Division level. And it was a week-long course and this thing is still going today. And we put it together in 2010. And it was designed to teach leaders how to train marksmanship. If there is one thing I could put in the basic leader course - the two things you have to do to be able to be a soldier is you have to qualify with your rifle, and you have to pass the PT test. I would put just as much emphasis on marksmanship as we do on physical fitness. We do not do that in the Army. We do not put as much emphasis on marksmanship as we do. I mean land nav [navigation], okay, land nav is important, got it. But in a firefight, everybody has to be able to shoot.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, not just the infantry, every soldier.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Every soldier. So, an example of how successful this was. 38 soldiers had gone through the training after one week, and they qualify on the last day. And of 38 soldiers, 17 -- everybody qualified first time, 17 qualified 'expert' with one chance to shoot, and of that -- of everybody that fired, the 38, the average call score was 34.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: And these were all different MOSs.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: This was at the BSB [Brigade Support Battalion]. This was a BSB that went through this training. So, 38 out of a BSB, so we had all -- and we had 91s, 92s, 88s, 68s; all those MOSs. One of things we did when I was a Brigade Sergeant Major was -- we did this thing called the Strike Challenge -- the Strike Blitz which was something like the Brigade Commander came up with. On a Monday morning, he would issue a Company --here's your mission. Go ahead and go do all of your trooping procedures, and on Thursday we

would -- they would go out, and we would be able to be evaluated on this thing, and I said sir, do you really want to have a marksmanship program? When they are finished with that mission, put them on trucks, drive them by the range and see, with one chance to qualify, how everybody shoots. And on average -- the average infantry company, with one chance to qualify, would shoot between 24 and 26.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Percent?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Score -- out of 40. And the field artillery would shoot just a little bit lower than that. And on average the BSB, the Company from the BSB would be around 17 to 18, and the Brigade [Special] Troops Battalion would be, 17, and the BSB would be 15, 14, 16 average qual [qualification] score with one chance to shoot.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: 23 is the minimum.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: 23 is the minimum. So, they would not even qualify. So, that's what drove -- that's what I learned as squadron leader drove us to

stand that training course up.

The other thing we did is improved EFMP, Expert Field Medical Badge training and improved the graduation rate. And it went from 9 percent from the year before when I was a Brigade Sergeant Major for the Division, and we worked to improve that to about 17, and then, 17 percent the next year, and the year following that, it was up to 25 percent success rate just by putting focus on it and sending the right people to train.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: And that was back to Fort Campbell once you got back?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yes.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Because we were still at the time doing -- brought guys without school, in theatre, or overseas.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Right.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: And then we get back and get them in school. So, Sergeant Major after your Division time there in August of 2012, you were assigned to the Army's 3rd Corps at Fort Hood where you

served as the 3rd Corps and Fort Hood Commander Sergeant Major. How much warning did you get on this job?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah. A couple of months actually because, it involved my PCSing there too so, I had a couple of months' notice, I think. And then I got there in July and I was supposed to go into the position in August. That wasn't the plan of the --

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Previous Sergeant Major?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Previous Sergeant Major.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Which you found when you got there?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: But then we were getting deployed also. So, but we did end up having a change of responsibility [ceremony] in August. So, the time in between -- that was a very easy transition for me, actually, at the Corps.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, no issue with your predecessor?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Not really. He wasn't ready to come out of position but, it was the right

thing because you can only do so much not being the Sergeant Major and see what's going on. You can't have two.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: You can't have two people.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: And so, we were going to deploy shortly after that. So, I wanted to learn the post. And so, having been in the 101st at Fort Campbell, I had already done the installation thing. I just needed to understand the uniqueness and what was at the post. I thought it was a very good transition for me. And the one thing I really learned and kind of took away from there was -- I said, I am peer leader. I was kind of a peer leader when I was a Brigade Sergeant Major, with the Battalion Sergeant Majors -- way I looked at myself, I was the - at the Division there -- we were also unencumbered at the time. So, really the other Divisions reported to FORSCOM except the Division that was on Fort Hood, came through the Corps.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: This was 1st Cav [Cavalry Division]?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah. 1st Cav. But I saw myself as a peer leader at 1st Cav. I wanted to let the 1st Cav Sergeant Major be the Division Sergeant Major, and what I saw where there was a gap was, all the separate Brigades on the installation did not have a Division Sergeant Major. So, I see the corps position as being important - for the Corps Sergeant Major to be that Division-type level. Be the Leader and mentor for those Brigades because they don't have it and they need it.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Who was their higher headquarters?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Well, some of them didn't have any -- they didn't have any at all. So, some didn't have any, some, they would be remote but, they still need --

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Nobody right there.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Nobody right there to help them when they need it, be some oversight and be sounding board and also --

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Is that something you established when you got there?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Well, it's just the way I ended up operating it and doing things. So, I think that worked well.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Now, Fort Hood being -- I haven't been to the place but I am sure it's bigger than [Fort] Campbell.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, was that an added difficulty or pretty much the same, just more people.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: No, it was bigger. It was easier - at that point I did -- I did Afghanistan, and that was pretty hard - that was pretty complex. It was just learning the Post and understanding the resources that I had available. And then, things that I didn't know -- shoot, I never had a truck with my name on it until I was a Battalion Sergeant Major.

And then I went to the 3rd Armored Corps. I was in a Bradley. I went to ANCOC [Advanced Non-

Commissioned Officer Course] just to do PMCS [Preventative Maintenance, Checks and Services]. So, trying to understand mounted gunnery, trying to get out, and understand those type of things. The importance of Master Gunners. It really helped me. I think, really I was there for the deployment more than I was to be the savior for all things armor. I trusted the Division Sergeant Major to be the subject matter expert when it came to that, and I needed him to help me understand it.

One thing we did do is -- I was very frustrated with not having the ability to train troopers on the CROWS [Common Remotely Operated Weapon Station] system prior to deploying. We weren't allowed -- so when I was the Division Sergeant Major, we wouldn't, as far as RSOI [Reception, Staging, Onward Movement and Integration] was concerned -- it drives me insane -- we wouldn't allow a soldier to come get through RSOI and pass the RSOI, and if he had a 9 mil [9mm Pistol], we would not allow him to move on unless they showed proficiency with their own weapon. But we would put them in the CROW vehicle with a .50 caliber [Machine

Gun] on top and tell them, hey, it's just like a video game, without any proper instruction. So, we put together a CROWS training academy and we did not bring civilians in to teach it. We got 13 of our Non-Commissioned Officers to be master gunner-certified on the CROWS training system. We had our own CROWS training academy and so everybody that would deploy, they would have access to those systems.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Was this in Afghanistan or prior to?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: No. This was on Fort Hood.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Fort Hood, prior to going.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: No. This was for the whole process of -- so anything anybody was sending, so we wanted to get leaders qualified because if you only train soldiers on how to operate it, that's not very good. Leader training plan and also the other thing that I continued to learn and involve, especially as a FORSCOM Sergeant Major was, you also have to have a

maintenance training plan. Otherwise, you become so reliant on your civilian --

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Contractors.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: -- contractors, that you can't get away from them. And we have to be able to get away from them.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: And Sergeant Major, you got to 3rd Corps, Fort Hood, and took over there as a Sergeant Major and then, in April, about eight months later, you deployed to Afghanistan, like you previously mentioned, for Operation Enduring Freedom. And this time, you also had the International Security Assistance Force, International Joint Command. You served that as Senior Enlisted Advisor and Command Sergeant Major as well. So, that coupled with 3rd Corps, what were your duties and responsibilities?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Well, 3 Corps was the headquarters. It was the core of the staff. So, we were at the IJC [International Joint Command] and our staff was separated in two. And so, General Milley was the Commander for IJC but he was also the Deputy

Commander for US Forces Afghanistan. And so, where General Dunford was the ISAF [International Security Assistance Forces] Commander and the Commander for US Forces Afghanistan, so, he was the NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] -- all the Commanders had multiple hats.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Right.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: So, General Dunford had -- was the NATO Commander for ISAF but he was also the American Commander for US Forces-Afghanistan. General Milley was the Commander for IJC in the NATO billet but the Deputy Commander for US Forces-Afghanistan. And our Corps -- the 3 Corps staff was broken into two. And so, part of it focused on the NATO mission and the other part focused on the US Forces-Afghanistan mission. So, our staff kind of got split in two. So, I found myself as the Sergeant Major for both IJC and US Forces-Afghanistan. So, we were under the IJC -- General Milley under IJC was responsible for all ground operations, conventional forces, ground operations in Afghanistan. He was the battle space owner for all of

Afghanistan. So, that was all of our operations, ANSF, Afghan National Security Forces, Afghan National Police development and, so we worked on that, operations and the US Forces piece.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, your battlefield circulation was -- how different was it from your time at Division level or was it --?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: So, there is a lot different because we had a Joint and a NATO staff. And so, when I talked about what meetings should I go to at the Division level and figuring out, I knew I didn't need to go to all meetings, and General Milley would not exclude me from any meetings. But the staff not knowing -- because the staff is not American. The staff is NATO from -- we had staff members from the UK [United Kingdom], we had staff members from New Zealand, we had staff members from Australia, we had staff members from, primary staff officers. And so, like I said before, the French and the Poles don't really appreciate the power and don't understand NCOs.

And even our own other forces - the other US

Forces, other than the Army, they don't really see the NCOs, they don't have the same authority that Army NCOs have. And so, I would go to a meeting and find that there was no place for me.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: You would be the only NCO there.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Well, not only was I the only NCO there. There wouldn't be a chair for me.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Stand at the door.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I would sit back in the corner. And so, I would say, hey -- so, my message to Sergeant Majors is, don't wear your emotions on your sleeve, it's okay. I would sit in the back in the room. And I would listen through it and see -- and at the end, I would say, hey, can I throw a couple of things in? And they said, sure Sergeant Major. And I would give them my -- I would give them a few things, and then I would also talk to the Chief of Staff because the Chief knew what things I was focused on and what I trying to do. And then, I would say, hey, so do you think this

would be good thing for me to go to?

So, then I started relishing not having a chair because I would walk in, in the middle of the meeting, with my folding chair. And I would sit in the part of the meeting that I thought was where I could have some input and be able to be valuable. And once the other nations' Generals and the other staff members that were from different services knew that General Milley listened to what I said, and valued my input, and also, I had a pretty good understanding of what was going on out on the ground. They would, instead of getting -- being questioned in the meeting, when they knew they were briefing and it was something that I might be interested in, they would go [knocking sound], hey, Sergeant Major I am briefing the CG tomorrow on a couple of things or later in the week on a couple of things. Do you have time to talk about it? Or they would send me an email and say, hey, I would like to sit down with you and see from your perspective.

And so, they would start coming to me. And so, it's just a different way. I could have demanded

and said, you will listen to me, that wouldn't have worked.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Probably not.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: So, some of the things we did. So, some of the things that I am pretty proud of that we changed is, we changed the RSOI. Back in the day, long time ago, we didn't have [vehicle] rollover trainers at every installation. And now we do -- then we did. And I would come and say, hey, why do I have to go through roller trainer after I have already done it back at home? Well, it was just good for them [your Soldiers] to go through. Well, if the Commander said they are trained and good to go, why are we making them do it again? And I came, and I came with my rifle, and now I am USFOR-A [U.S. Forces-Afghanistan] and IJC Sergeant Major, and now I am at the RSOI site, and now my Commander is responsible for this stuff. And I am there with a rifle that I have zeroed out to 100 meters, and I engaged moving targets at 250 [meters] on Fort Hood, and I am at RSOI, and I said, I'm zeroed, and you want me to zero my rifle at 25 meters, and you want me

to adjust my sites on a 25-meter target? Yes. And what if I am comfortable with where I am right now with my rifle? An ACOG [Advanced Combat Optical Gunsight] is designed to be zeroed at 100 meters. Well, I know. But 25 meters is not as good as 100 meters. Well, I know. But you still -- and I engage targets out to 250 [meters] moving and I hit those targets out to 250 [meters] at Fort Hood, and I am comfortable with that and you still want me to -- yes. I said, would you make every soldier do that? Yes. Well, I said, I am not doing it.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: And who was this?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: This was the RSOI people at RSOI in Afghanistan.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: This was NATO or American [contractors]?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: No. These are American contractors. And I said, we are going to stop this right now.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: And so you were able to change that.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Oh, yeah. So, rollover trainers went home. That saved the government 23 million dollars a year.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: That saved contractors' pay and all the other stuff.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yes. So, we changed some other things. And the other thing we did is we stopped doing a whole bunch of PowerPoint [slide presentations] and instead of doing PowerPoint, we made videos of rules of engagement, escalation of force, driving directive, all the directives, all those directives and tactics. We did some videos, so we could play the videos. So, we could have Sergeant Majors in Army uniforms leading some of the training because we have plenty of Sergeant Majors on these installations to help facilitate some of the training. So, they were more relevant.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, that job, Sergeant Major, as far as the IJC and -- I guess, you said earlier, your time in Afghanistan, kind of, prepared you for this. So, it wasn't that big of a leap for you as far as the area of responsibility?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Right. So, when I went to Afghanistan as a Division Sergeant Major, we were building all these bases, and all these OPs [Observation Posts] and all this stuff, and when we came back as the IJC Sergeant Major, we were trying to close them all down.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, similar but different.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, overall how do you think your guys did and the guys at the IJC [did] over there?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I was proud, I mean, all service members and all what we were doing. I was proud of what we were doing. You can see the ANSF [Afghan National Security Forces] making progress.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: And you guys, you came back -- you went over in April and came back in February of 2014. You serve there [Fort Hood] for about another four months. You didn't have a whole lot of time prior to deployment, so is there anything you would

like to add about your time as the 1st Cavalry Division Command Sergeant Major?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I really enjoyed Fort Hood. I liked it a lot there. I think, some of the things that we focused on, on the post: culture, pride in the post, corps heritage. I think we got to remember that Sergeant Majors are responsible for heritage, and discipline, and understanding. When I was at 101st [Airborne Division (Air Assault)], we were always singing that the Division song. They never sang the corps song. We [at Fort Hood] started singing the corps song; we put a book together. And so, the meaning of the names of buildings and roads and things, [like] the Copeland center. People knew it as the Copeland center, but people didn't understand that Copeland was a Sergeant Major of the Army. Those were some things that would be interesting. An using Audie Murphy Awardees to help with those type things and development of their soldiers.

The other thing was fitness culture. We built nine obstacle courses along the PT route. Anybody

could go out and take advantage of the obstacle courses. And initially, everybody -- people wanted to put signs up of what this obstacle was and how to do it. I said, I don't want to do it. I don't want a sign up because we don't tell troopers how to negotiate obstacles in combat. I want them to come out here and figure it out themselves. And then, they wanted to put fences up around the obstacle courses. I said I don't want fences up. I don't want barriers up around the obstacle courses. I want them to have access to it. And then, they said we will have to schedule it [have an appointment to use it]. I said no. We are not going to schedule it.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: No scheduling to use them, you said that?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah. I want them running down the road, and if they see it, hey, let's go do some pull-ups, let's go do rope climbing, let's go do this. And they said, well, we have to tell them they have to have a minimum of a combat lifesaver and a combat lifesaver bag. I said, a combat lifesaver bag

and an aid bag are for combat trauma. You are not going to have combat trauma on an obstacle course.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Call 911, if it's an emergency.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: That's right. Keep 'em in place, manual traction, call 911, call somebody. And then, they wanted to have a minimum uniform. I said I don't care if they come out there in flip flops and a doggone beach towel. I just wanted them to be going down the road, and get onto that obstacle course, and do some stuff. So, that was something and we continued to do that. Leader and professional development and trying to get away from mandatory training. Trying to move away from some of that stuff. Those were some of the things.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Was there anything from your time as the Corps [CSM] at Fort Hood, Sergeant Major, or even IJC --? I want to talk about your next position, you are FORSCOM [CSM] next, but anything from there that maybe helped prepare you for your time as FORSCOM Commander Sergeant Major?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I think being exposed to the armor community, and understanding of mounted gunnery, and the importance of the master gunners, and the master gunner program, the appreciation of that, and the scope and scale of what it requires, maintenance requirement that I would have not understood coming from a light [non-mechanized unit experience] background.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, just preface it but so, in July of 2014, not too long after you got back from Afghanistan, you were assigned to Fort Bragg where you took over as the Forces Command, Commander Sergeant Major. Did you have -- what kind of warning did you have prior to this job or notice did you have before you --?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah. I had a couple of months. That was good.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: And so, you were called by the FORSCOM Commander. Is that how that one worked?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: That was more like what we are doing now. So, pretty much, they built a slate

for the CG, and I was one of the members on the slate, so I got called to do an interview. Yeah, Sergeant Major Greca did call me before I got called and said he was (inaudible)-- but that's about it.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, how was your transition with him or did you have time --?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: So, he was excited a little bit. So, he was focusing on where he was going and what he was getting ready to do but we transitioned. It went okay. There is no amount of preparation that will prepare you for that position. I will tell you that is the most complicated transition I have ever made. And I really did not have an appreciation for the magnitude or understanding of what this position was until I had been in position for a while. I mean, I had no clue.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Is it the scope? The size or --?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: It was scope and scale. And so, from understanding Total Force policy to trying to get some type of schools program together, to focus

on some of the things that I thought that I could leverage. Nothing -- very few things happened in the Army without first getting vetted through FORSCOM.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Equipment, training.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Equipment, training, maintaining, nothing.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: And there is always somebody testing out equipment for us.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: That's FORSCOM: man, train and equip conventional forces for employment by Combatant Commanders. But understanding the [Army National] Guard and [Army] Reserve -- so, once I got there I appreciated the Guard Reserve, the working with the Guard Reserve in different capacities but I did not appreciate that the United States Army cannot deploy without the Army Reserve. 70 percent or better of our logistics capabilities lies in the Reserve component. The majority of our medical capabilities are in the Reserve. The United States Army cannot sustain a campaign without the National Guard.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: And that was the first time you really got to experience --

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: That's when I really it cooked in my brain, hey --

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: The magnitude of it.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: -- this is important. The Guard and Reserve is important. We got to spend some time. We got to develop a relationship, we got to understand them. So, one of my first places I went was to Maine. Spend some time with the Maine National Guard. And so, trying to get an understanding of everything.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Why the Maine Guard?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Because they were available when I asked them.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Okay. You can go to any of them.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I know I can go to any of them but they asked. So, I went and then spent time

with the Reserve. I think it's the 377th [377th Theater Sustainment Command]; they've got 20,000 people. They are spread all across the nation. 20,000-person organization spread across 30 states. It's very complex and what they are facing. And then, making sure we were talking about total force policy. Making sure that the policies that we are writing are consistent and can be used by all but not only active component focused. Yeah, it was eye-opening. And it was probably, it was hard but it was probably one of the most satisfying jobs I had.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Was there any particular challenge that you had right away beside maybe the Guard and Reserve relationship.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: That was one. The other one that was I was tired of getting my butt whopped about Drill Sergeant attrition, and not getting people to Drill Sergeant school, and not getting them going to recruiting school. And we did not have a schools program in FORSCOM. And trying to get that straight and working on making sure that we get people that were

identified to be Drill Sergeants, getting them to school. And then so, one of the first things I did within the first couple of months of being there and getting -- it wasn't a new issue but it was my new biggest focus. So, one of my first trips, I went down to Fort Jackson, and went to the Drill Sergeant school, and did the PT test with all people at the Drill Sergeant school.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: That particular class of Drill Sergeants?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah, well, so went down there in to the class, one of their classes stood up and did the PT test with them. I saw how they did it and then how it went through and I saw some things. And at that time, we were giving them bad 1059s [Academic Evaluation Report forms] for going through. And I saw that we had a Sergeant First Class, 92G [Food Service Specialist], that took that PT test, and passed his three-event PT test, and missed his (inaudible) by one percent, and they gave him a negative 1059.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: failed to meet

course standards or whatever it was?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah. And 50 percent of his peers couldn't -- weren't even eligible to get selected to go to Drill Sergeant school because they were on a permanent profile.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, we were shooting ourselves in the foot.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: And so we were giving him bad paper. And, that same Sergeant First class, if we would have told him, hey, tomorrow at 4 o'clock, you're deploying, he'd have his duffle bags out front, on the deck, ready to do it. And we were hurting ourselves. So, that was one thing that came out of that.

And the other thing was -- test. And I had been telling people this for a while that -- test your troopers under the same conditions that you are going to be tested. And so, many people wouldn't even do a PT test [with unbiased, higher ranking evaluators]. They would just let, an equal [test them]. So, Staff Sergeant Jones grades Staff Sergeant Smith on the PT

test. And then, they would be run an out and back course [a two-mile run course where runners run one mile in one direction, then turn around at runs the same route back to the start point]. Well, they don't run out and back course at Drill Sergeant School. They run on a quarter mile track and they put 100 people on it. 50 people on one side and 50 people on the other side.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, you got to keep passing each other.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Well, you got to run a mile around a quarter mile track. 8 laps.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, for some people, it's mentally challenging.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Maybe it's mentally challenging or maybe their out and back course isn't as long as 8 laps around a track.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Well, you remember the old training principal, train as you fight.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: That's right. So, if you are going to run on an oval track [for your PT test], go run on an oval track. So, that was one - schools, Drill

Sergeant, Recruiter, master gunner was a huge one. Other thing that I really wanted to focus on was make the Soldier and NCO of the year competition a true FORSCOM competition that tested them physically and technically. And we also developed a FORSCOM marksmanship competition to try to get marksmanship to be a priority in FORSCOM.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, that was like in each installation or Division would send their best or how --?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yes. And not just each installation but each component, the Reserve and the National Guard. The other thing that ended up being on my plate was CSL [Centralized Selection List]. So, for last three years I looked at all the flagging for CSL. And the report comes out, I think, we had this last year 248 both Battalion and Brigade positions.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: For Brigade Sergeant Major, Battalion Sergeant Major positions?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I have reviewed every ERB [Enlisted Record Brief] in every position. And we got

much better from year to year because the first year was not as good as the second year, and the second year we got 50 percent of the Sergeant Majors that got selected to be a Battalion or Brigade Sergeant Major were on permanent profiles.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Wow. And this was the before -. But this was still opt-in, right?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah. This was opt-in. And so, the other thing was we were slating Sergeant Majors in positions where they had little or no experience in that type of unit, in some cases. We were really setting Commanders - Units' Commanders, soldiers, and Sergeants Major up for failure when we are sending somebody to an organization where they have little to no experience. And did that a -- this might get picked up in recording or not -- did you know that an optical fabrication specialist when they get promoted to Master Sergeant, becomes a 98 Whiskey. 98 Whiskey. So, that's a medic.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: A medic.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah. But an optical

fabrication specialist. And they become a Whiskey and then they could be selected to be an BSB [Brigade Support Battalion] CSM. And they have never been in a tactical environment in their life, and now they are going to be responsible for making sure that a distribution company can do mounted gunnery.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: I wonder if it's still an issue.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: It's not an issue anymore. And so, it's not about what's better and good for the NCO. It's what's right for the organization.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Not that particular scenario but not having the right guys with the background, was it just because not enough [Sergeants Major] were competing [for selection to become a battalion or brigade Command Sergeant Major]?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I don't think that's the case. I think part of it was the different branches were trying to do their best to provide their people and their branch an opportunity. We are doing so much better and the SMA [Sergeant Major of the Army] has done

a lot to give the ACOM [Army Command] Sergeant Majors to have the flexibility to adjust those things. And then, the branches have come along to work to try to -- so they see that things are changing so they are going ahead, hey, they are not even going to put those people in those positions now and we are not selecting them. So, I predict that this year will be even better than last year.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, the Army Materiel Command Sergeant Major, the Training and Doctrine Command Sergeant Major, and the Forces Command, Command Sergeant Major now --

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Review all of it and then we send our things in and the things we can't work out. We all meet together at HRC [Human Resources Command] with the SMA, the Commander of HRC, and the branches. And we work through --

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: To pick the right guy in the right position.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: We needed the right people in the right position. Or, we get the right

people in the right position, or when we can't work that, then we work a strategy to get them prepared for that, and make sure we understand the risks that we are taking. It's not their fault in many cases. Sometimes it's inventory. So, I thought I'll begin with that. I mean, both the CSMs and the Commanders' fitness has improved. When I showed General Abrams what we had been doing, he said, hey, do we do that with the Commanders? No. He said, I want to start.

And then, I think, the other thing I am proud of that we did at the FORSCOM level was nominative Sergeant Major and then CSM. That process has gotten better. It's probably not as good as it could be. It sounded very difficult initially. We had a large select list and when I first went out, it's like how I am going to represent all these Sergeants Major that are on this list when I don't know them. And so, being the largest command, I had the most. And so, I would get with the Corps and Division Sergeant Majors, and say, hey, I need to know these people. So, when I would travel, I would try to meet with them so I could sit down with them, but

I still couldn't meet them all. So, one of the things we started doing is we did an assessment. A development assessment and counseling tool.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: I remember that.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: And so, I counseled every -- there was not a doubt in a Corps Sergeant Major or a Division Sergeant Major's mind because I spoke to every one of them, and told them where I thought they stood, and where I thought they could best serve the Army. And then, I asked them in turn to do those assessments on their people two levels down and then send those assessments back. And so, my admin [administrative assistant] would -- it was like a scurry town, my admin and I had a Sergeant Major that I used -- I really need to talk to you about that because that was a very powerful -- they would put all that stuff together, so I could have a good assessment of each one of them that I could represent them properly at that panel. I was pretty proud of that.

I mentioned that Sergeant Major but I tell you, one of the things that I did was I had an admin and

then, I had a driver, and I felt like I didn't need a driver. My admin could do both and one of the things I wanted to do is -- we found some Sergeant Majors that were coming from the Academy at Fort Bliss. that had been picked for CSL [Centralized Selection List] at the time. And the first year, I would come in and I said, hey, I want one to come up and work with me until they go into their CSL billet. And so, it did two things. One, it provided them a huge opportunity to learn and grow --

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: -- to get prepared and it also helped me because I had a Sergeant Major that could help me with my NOM [Nominative] process, who can help me with -- When I was travelling, help me put briefings and products together for me, and help me with those type of things, and so that was very helpful. So, I think, when I talk about -- you were going to ask me about problems with Sergeant Majors in a little bit. I think it's a huge organization.

I think the other thing was the partnership

that I built with Sergeant Major Davenport as a TRADOC Sergeant Major. Nothing happens in the Army without going through FORSCOM and TRADOC. And Sergeant Major Davenport and I, you could not see those -- no light between us. And we both respected each other and each other's perspectives. We also knew that they didn't always -- what we needed didn't always line up. But we were willing to make concessions but we supported each other 100 percent. In public, we were -- in private sometimes we might not always agree and we would talk to and we would come to a consensus what was right for the Army, not necessarily for either one of the commands but what's right for the Army because by the time you get to FORSCOM or TRADOC, it's not about you, and it's not about your unit, it's about the Army.

One of the other things I learned was the FORSCOM headquarters is about 300 people, and only about 250 are wearing green [Army uniforms]. And our DOD civilians are amazing, and they are great resources, and they are totally committed to the service. And they need to be -- they need to be -- every once in a while,

they need some attention, and recognition, and talking to them -- hey, how you doing? It's really important. They do the work force.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major anything you passed on to your successor there at FORSCOM that maybe you didn't know going in or he asked?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: One of the things I make, hey, get familiar with the Guard and Reserve, make sure you focus on any policies that are happening and make sure you take into consideration the deployed force. Anything that we do has to be deployable, and there has to be things built in there so troopers that are deployed are not disadvantaged against other people that don't deploy. That's very important. And those are the couple of things that I talked to him. I mean, by the time you get there, some of the things, you are just going to figure out on your own, I told him. Well, I just put him in a position where he had to pick, picking the admin team. So, I tell all Nom guys -- don't hold on to the people, the admin people from the last person because --

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Let them get back to their career.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Let them back to their career but also, you are not that guy or gal. And so, they might not be able to get past that. And choose wisely and be patient. So, it took me long to get -- it takes you long to get some good people because nobody wants to give those good people up.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Right.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: You got to be patient. You got to find them. You got to figure out where to get them. And you can't keep them forever.

The other thing was we worked hard on is, we talked about recognizing excellence with promotions. When I would go to a place and -- why are we not promoting these people? So, you have like four or five people that get a FORSCOM Sergeant Major or Commander's Coin -- your Commander can --. General Abrams was awesome when it came to -- once he saw some things that I was working on and trying to get after, he would be like, yeah, we are going to work on this. And so, he

started asking the same questions that I would ask when troopers would be getting coins -- and it's a specialist, hey, are you promotable? Well, why not? If it is a PFC [Private First Class] getting a coin, hey when is this trooper getting promoted? Because here is an example. We had a soldier -- when I told him this story, this is when he got on the bandwagon. We had a PFC at the FORSCOM soldier of the year competition. This means he was an installation soldier of the year.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Right.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: He was a PFC. Hey when are you getting promoted? I think I am going to be promoted next month, Sergeant Major. So how long have you been in the Army. 23 months. So, we are looking at his ERB. He is a post, he is an installation soldier of the year and we couldn't get him a waiver [to promote him to Specialist]?

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So he was going to get promoted along with everybody else, at 24 months.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Right. You ask the First Sergeant. I asked the First Sergeant, hey, how many

specialists do you have performing team leader duty, serving as team leaders? 14. I think the number was 12 or 14. I said, how many of them are promotable? I said, well, what's wrong with the rest of them, why can't they go to the Board. Send them to the Board.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Right.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Promote excellence. Recognize excellence. We don't do enough of that.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: We have that many in position, some of them got to be performing well.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Some of them got to be and if they are not -- I told the Brigade Sergeant Major. So I said, hey, if we held you to the same standard we hold Sergeants or specialists to, none of you all will be Brigade Sergeant Majors because you are not ready yet. No, they are not ready to be team leader yet. Well, you got them in the damn position.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Yeah.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Make them a Sergeant. It's based on their demonstrated leadership potential.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Or [promote them

to] Corporal. Give them NCO powers.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah. May as well pay them, just pay them. Then, the other thing is knowing your role. I think sometimes we forget what our role is. I mean, as Sergeant Majors we are not Commanders.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: That's one of the other questions I have.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Okay. Well, let's go ahead and get to your other question.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, up to now we have basically been talking about your numerous assignments, duty positions, that kind of stuff. So, now I want to get your take, or your insights, and your opinions on the NCO Corps kind of writ large. So, throughout your career -- we touched on some of these already when you attended obviously all the mandatory NCO education courses, primary leadership development course which now is the Basic Leader Course all the way to the Sergeants Major Academy. Do you believe that those institutional domain courses helped prepare you for your subsequent duties as a Sergeant

First Class, a Master Sergeant, First Sergeant or if not, what do you think was missing from some of those courses?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I would say yes, no, and maybe.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: So, my answer is yes, no, or maybe. I would say basic leader course or PLDC for me was right on time. I would say BNCOC [Basic Non-Commissioned Officer Course] and for --

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Now, it's the advanced --

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Now it's the Advanced Leader Course. For me, I was a Sergeant going in to a squad leader position. It was right on time, and it was correct.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: And I would say ANCOC [Advanced Non-Commissioned Officer Course], I had already been a Platoon Sergeant, and I had been a squadron leader for 57 months, and it was not on time. I got a couple of things out of it, but not that great.

But the First Sergeant Course was okay. I would say the Sergeants Major Academy was not what I needed at that time. I think where we struggle is we don't get people to school at the right time. And so, yeah it's a great course but I had been a team leader for years, so now I am at the basic leader course.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: All right.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Well, I had been a squad leader for a year and now, it is good training but we have already done all this. It would have been better if I had it earlier. So, I think, timing matters. That's probably the most important thing.

And then, the other thing is when I go -- so for me, I would say in most cases, yes. But today, or when I was the FORSCOM Sergeant Major, and I would go and visit -- and it's not a long time -- and where do we see our senior - I'll just talk SLC [Senior Leader Course] and the Master Leader Course, and the Sergeant Major Course. I think BLC is really good, and I think the ALCs [Advanced Leader Courses] I have been to, are very good, if the timing is right.

Where I think we are missing the boat is at SLC [Senior Leader Course] and with the new Master Leader Course -- I think we missed the boat. And when I talked to Master Sergeants and First Sergeants, I asked them where they struggle the most. And they struggle with admin, systems, schools, those type things and none of that is addressed [in those courses]. Training, none of that is addressed. We are talking about joint war-fighting and we are talking about writing in APA [American Psychological Association] style formats. And I don't care. I would like them to be able to string three sentences together and make a brief paragraph that I can read and it's informative. If they can put two or three of those paragraphs together, even better. I do not need ten pages from a senior NCO because they don't have time to write it and I certainly don't have time to read it.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, more -- you are more [concerned about] -- what they have to do within their job.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yea. We need to be

comfortable with our role. And what I believe has happened is during our time doing counter insurgency, there is a shortage of State Department - Civilian State Department representatives. And I believe our officer leadership had to perform some of those roles. And at that time, we had to have senior NCOs step up and perform roles that would typically be executed by our commissioned officers. And there is reason that we have commissioned officers, non-commissioned officers, and warrant officers. And those roles have merged in many cases. In the past, a warrant officer would be able to listen to a piece of equipment and know exactly what seal is blown.

Today, we have them [warrant officers] doing staff operations and they are not that technically savvy on the equipment that we have, even though our equipment is more complex than it looks in the past. And today, we have non-commissioned officers working on staff functions, focused on staff planning, when the role of a non-commissioned officer is train, lead; train and lead small units, focus on training individual team and

crews, discipline. It's in 600-20. Army Regulation 600-20 hasn't changed. But we all ask our non-commissioned officers to do has. It is out of balance and that really -- it needs to get back in balance if we are going to work on combined arms maneuver and wide area security. Because that's the fight we have to be prepared for.

And commissioned officers, commanders, rely on their non-commissioned officers for the depth of their knowledge and understanding in the organizations they are serving in right now. That one. And you don't have it if you haven't served in those type of organizations. So, we need to be a mile deep and little bit wide, not a mile wide and a little bit deep.

That's kind of where I am. So, some of the biggest soldier issues and the issues we have with soldiers are finances and family. We have issues with maintenance, we have issues with schools, getting people to schools. Those are conversations we have on the VTC [Video Tele-Conference] with the Sergeant Major of the Army. Why is there not anything that -- there is

nothing in the Sergeant Majors Academy that talks about schools' program? There is nothing in the master leader course designed to talk about developing a schools' program and running a schools' program as a Master Sergeant or a First Sergeant. There is nothing that talks about how to help people with financial planning. A Financial NCO, a financial Staff Sergeant. I mean, is that -- that's not who I want my son going to for financial advice, not the Staff Sergeant, financial planning dude. That's not who you want your daughter going to either.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Unless he had a degree in finance or something.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: And so, these are some things that I think we should work on. And so, I think -- what's your next question?

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, these are general questions for NCO Corps at large. So, for senior NCOs, so your Platoon Sergeants, your Section Sergeants, what are some keys things that, in your opinion, a senior NCO, DA [Department of the

Army] selected - Centralized Board Selected [NCOs] -- this guy or gal to be a senior NCO, what are some of things he or she must do to be an effective leader of their NCOs and their soldiers?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah. So one, know your craft. Be technically and tactically proficient, know your people, understand the resources you have available to you and how to leverage them. Be a trainer, be fit, and capable, and you have to be able to communicate both, orally and in writing.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, Major in your opinion what are some of the things that a senior -- same thing, a senior NCO, whether he is a First Sergeant or he or she is a Platoon Sergeant, Section Sergeant, Staff Lead, a section or a S3 section NCOIC, to be an effective advisor now to the Commission Officer?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I would say they rely on your depth of knowledge and experience, you got to allow them to command, you have to allow them to fail but never embarrass them or allow them to fail where it shows negatively to their leaders -- their direct

leaders, show them respect, provide them with best advice and respect their decisions -- respect and support their decisions.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Sergeant Major, how important was -- now I think we talked about this little earlier but -- civilian education in our -- still in our promotion system to Sergeant to - sometimes even to Specialist, but to Sergeant or Staff Sergeant, you have different points that soldiers are given [for the civilian education they have completed] so they can be more competitive and they have to make so many points to make that next grade -- civilian education, some people come in [the Army] with it, some people get it while they are in, some people don't pursue that at all -- in your career, how did civilian education help develop you as a Non-Commissioned Officer or not, or how do you feel about that?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah. Well, so I think in some cases -- I value civilian education, one, I value it. I believe that civilian education, we should focus on those things that help us be a better soldier,

also help us be a better citizen, and understand -- you can't be a good senior leader or a good senior leader in the Army without being a good citizen too. So, you need to know how the rest of the world works. But sometimes, we put too much emphasis on it. And I also don't agree with -- when we talk about the continuum of learning -- learning over an entire life.

So, we don't make our actions match our words because I could come in the Army with a four-year degree and I get promoted as a specialist [E-4]. I come in as a specialist. And then, I can use all those promotion points to get promoted to Sergeant. And then all those promotion points -- and I haven't done anything to make myself any smarter as far as education. And I continue to get rewarded for something I did before I came in the Army. When we have people like come in the Army and maybe they didn't have any college, but they continue to learn, and they are a life-long learner, and they are learning over time -- I think you should only get recognized one time, and then you get recognized during that time a little bit but I don't think -- and we have

gotten away from this. We have back pedaled in some cases from civilian education and still something that's important. Nothing is more important than your technical and tactical competence and your leadership ability.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, specifically for selection for those First Sergeants and Master Sergeants to be Sergeants Major, how much education do you think is enough or how do you see civilian education there? Where do you think they need to be?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I think a lot. Personally, I think civilian education should be able to augment what we are learning in PME [Professional Military Education] or in the NCOPDS [Non-Commissioned Officer Professional Development System]. And maybe, we align that with the different [enlisted pay] grades. And so, at the Sergeant level the things that I should be -- I need to be able to communicate. And so, maybe I take English 101 and maybe I need to take a math course. And then maybe for the Staff Sergeant level, I should

take -- there should be some counseling, or some cultural awareness training, or so I could take religions of the world or something.

Because I would say that when I did college, the college classes that I took while I was in the service and taking those things, they really have helped me be a better soldier. But it was not going to work in with my technical or tactical confidence, but it also helped me. So, taking some of those classes, and having a bigger perspective of the world, and understanding of what's going on in the service, and being able to communicate better, I think they have all helped me. History, those type of things.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: I know -- not necessarily me, but I know there are certain folks out there that say, hey, I am going to -- these are nominative guys, so I am going to be working for a three-star level Commander or even a Division Commander. But I am going to be working for somebody that probably has multiple masters' degrees. How am I going to advise him or her with my pedigree, so to speak? If I can't

communicate with the same language. Do you see that as an issue in your experience? Because that's their argument, so to speak, for hey, we have to get everybody college educated in the Army. Now some people believe that. So, for us to be very good advisors or communicators for the boss if I am over here, I have to speak for the Commander, the Commander is giving that power. I am speaking for the Commander over here but if I don't speak well, I won't be able to communicate that effectively.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Well, a Master's degree won't make you a better communicator. I have seen some people that have PhDs and Masters' degrees that couldn't lead a chipmunk to an acorn. And so, I think you need to be able to communicate and you got to be able to tailor your communication to, from Private to General. And when you communicate based on your experience, and knowledge, and your knowledge, and experience, and depth in technical and tactical expertise are there, and you have a good understanding of those, you will be able to communicate with those

topics. And guess what, those Generals are pretty smart. They know what they want. And they want Command Sergeant Majors that were First Sergeants, Platoon Sergeants, squad leaders, and that understand soldiers - - they are not looking for PhD dissertation, they are not looking for you to do a big study. They want to know what the ground truth is, and what's going on, and the impact on soldiers.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Okay, Sergeant Major, so -- and we talked about this, institutional -- now that you know the whole -- you have experienced unit-level training obviously your whole career. How important was that to your particular development? I know we hit it [discussed it] as we've gone along but -- we talked about schools, schools is one thing but, unit training is --

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: It's the most important. That's where you get your experience. That's where you learn, and you learn from your failures, and you do some things, and then you get better. And I think the schools are just there to help you -- so, if you get to

school at the right time, those are the things that help you understand what you are supposed to be doing, and how to go about it, and give you the principles. But you have to put those in practice. You have to put principles in practice. And so, I think, in an organization -- and I think sometimes we give people timelines and dates. I think it should be conditions-based. I was a squad leader for 57 months. I was a squad leader for 57 months! I probably didn't need to be a squad leader that long but really, I had a very good understanding of squad and platoon tactics. And so, I tell you, I had a --

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Plus, a Ranger school background.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Ranger school helped, but that was only 50 days. I had a Platoon Sergeant -- a Scout Platoon Sergeant in an Infantry Battalion when I was Brigade Sergeant Major, and he got picked for Master Sergeant. He got picked and put on Master Sergeant List. And everybody was wanting to know in their companies -- So, a Scout Platoon Sergeant in an

Infantry Battalion is the best -- one of the best Platoon Sergeants in the Battalion. So, I went down and said, hey, we are moving you. Oh, what company am I getting? You are not getting a Company, you are going to the Battalion S3. He said, oh, I would just rather be a Platoon Sergeant. I told him, hey, Platoon Sergeant, I said, what are you going to be between now and in the next six or eight months that is going to make you, that you are going to be better at being a Platoon Sergeant than you are right now. Well, not that much. I said, good. Now you are going to the S3. Now you understand what goes on inside a Company. I am going to show you how the Company functions from the outside. And so, you are going to go there so that you can be a better First Sergeant. And so, that is -- managing somebody, not managing them but putting them in a position where they can learn, grow and thrive. And timing matters and so --

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: What we call talent management now.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: We call talent

management. That is putting the right people in right place, so they can be successful, and they can learn and grow.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: They might be kicking and screaming going into it, but it is better for them in the long run.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: That's right. And it's a good thing. I did my little bit of staff time. That was a good thing that I did it. I learned a lot from it.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: The reason I brought up unit training is, even in my career I have seen where a lot of people say, well, the school shouldn't handle that part.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Right.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: The unit should do this.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: The school should teach them land nav [navigation]. So there is this debate back and forth, should we just, school is just a

test of what the unit should already have trained this guy on.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, I don't know what your opinion is on that. Some people even argue that with the Basic Leader Course. Why are we teaching them Land nav in the Basic Leader Course? We should just test it, for example. So, I would just like to get your take on - we are all busy, and that's a school's function. It is kind of like parents --

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah. So, if everything was perfect, we would be able to have everybody show up to their organization, trained, and perfect, and be able to do everything, in a perfect world, and unlimited resources -- but you can't get experience in a course. You can get educated and you get some training.

There is a difference between education and training. Education is concepts and principles. Training is tasks. And so, you can get a little bit. You get, you got to figure out what the fulcrum is between education and training in the institutional

model. And I think it's probably -- education is probably 80 percent and 20 percent training. And on the other side in the organization, you are getting 80 percent training and maybe 20 percent education, where you get some education, self-education, professional -- leader professional development education. So, I think, you just got to figure out what the fulcrum is for each one of those.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: And as you probably know in the Non-Commissioned Professional Development System now, they are putting some of that education stuff in BLC; reading, writing, that kind of stuff.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Right.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: And they are putting leadership back in, which is good. Because for a while, we went away from teaching leadership in the basic course.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: If I had my way, so, you didn't ask me about SSD and what I thought about SSD [Structured Self-Development]. And I can tell you what

troopers think about SSD. And they think its check the block [training]. And it's check the block if you allow it to be check the block. And so, if I could have my way, there would be an SSD test.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, you'll be glad to know that it [SSD] is changing.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Good.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, it is now going to be -- its changing to where, it is not going to be called SSD anymore either. It's training they have to do, it's going to be interactive and what they score on that training -- it's kind of like the - I forget what the name is -- say if they get a C on that, they start the Basic Leader Course with C average.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: That is still going to be online right?

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: It's mostly going to be online yeah. But it's developed to where, what they are doing here is actually an advance sheet for the course. So, the training there is actually going to be training that is going to tested on --

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: It's getting tested at the PME.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: At the PME.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: So, that will be tested at PME.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: It's preliminary stuff.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: So, they will get the training. They will get exposed to it. And then, when they get to school they get tested on it?

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Right. And they are going to get to know whether they need more training --

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: That's what I have been asking.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: It's an advance - Sergeant Major Davenport said it is going to be kind of like an advance sheet for the course.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: This is what I have been asking for.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: It's coming.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: So, just give them an SSD test. I don't care how much --

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: And it's going to be interactive. So, the guys are going to have to go in there and based on -- there may not be a right or wrong answer.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Right.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: It's this choice or that choice. Okay, there is consequences for that choice. It's changing.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: That's better. So, that's the other thing. At different organizations at different levels, it takes longer for things to change. You can turn a Platoon or Company like that. So, Sergeant Major Davenport heard me.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: It's coming. It's changing.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Any particular training events in your career that you think were most important or had the biggest impact on you?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I think some of the things that we talked about some of those impacts are EIBs, skill qualification testing, collective training, CTC [Combat Training Center] rotations. There was not a CTC rotation that I went to that I did not learn something at every level. And then, the methodology that the 82nd [Airborne Division] used with their leader training program was really very powerful for my career and the way that I progressed.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Along those same lines, any particular mission or event -- and you had multiple deployments -- anything -- in your professional development, anything from those deployments, in particular, that affected you positively?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I would say there were so many things that were positive. The importance of presence, and being personally present, and knowing your troopers, and knowing what they are doing, and knowing what they are capable of. I can tell you stories, and stories, and just stories of just showing up on mountain top some place. And someone would ask. Sergeant Major

Schroeder. I said yeah, what's up. I have only ever seen pictures of you on the wall. I said, well hell, let's get a snap right now. And let's get a picture right now. And I will get it to you. And I got at that.

So, one of things what I get -- as a nominative Sergeant Major, when I would look to get troopers as my admins -- I did not want 42s [42As, human resources specialists]. I wanted sol -- and I did not want combat arms [Soldiers]. I wanted somebody that was different than me. And I wanted somebody that I could get a different perspective from.

So, being able to communicate and know what troopers were thinking, and what was going on, and having that perspective. I think that's important. And, I think, being out there training with them, and showing up, and I would tell people, when I would go to visit units, and there is a training [event], I would never pull out a cell phone. Because as soon as you are training and you pull your cell phone out, you tell troopers whatever is on that cell phone is more

important than what they are doing. And that's not the truth. So, the importance of presence, recognizing excellence is huge. Yeah.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: I know you briefly mentioned about the Sergeant Majors course. I want to touch on that real quick. And it is changing and, it's getting better all the time. But when you went, you said it wasn't so great. So, what were some of your takeaways from the training? What would you wish that -- you already mentioned some of it, just kind of going back on that, some things that should been in there that weren't. That would have helped you as an Ops Sergeant Major or a CSM.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: So, we are very critical sometimes. And so, one can never catch up to what we wish we were. And when I went to the course, I was also (inaudible). Pull us on to that course, we think we have reached the top and there is nothing that anybody can tell us. And, we got it all figured out because we got picked. We are the top one percent of the Army and you can't tell me shit. So, the reality was that -- I

will tell you -- so that's the only course now until the Master Leader Course -- from the Basic Leader Course to the Master Leader Course, or the Basic Leader Course to the Sergeant Majors Academy at that time, is the first time you are at a course that you have other MOSs that are there, that you are not associated with. So, people outside of your branch, and then people from different components, and then people from different services, and then people from different nations. That is a positive thing. Those are all positives and that's all good if you take advantage of it.

Some of the negative things were, I think, sometimes we tell people, we tell our Sergeant Majors that hey, you need to start looking at strategic type stuff. And we are telling Sergeant Majors that -- at the Sergeant Majors Academy there -- and they believe that, and they want to believe that. But they are so far away from being a nominative Sergeant Major that they need to be focused on tactical and operational proficiency. And very few of them will be working -- It will take them a while to move to a strategic type

staff.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: And, how many of them is that going to be?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: It's not going to be at all and they will figure that out as they go. So, I think, I might have already said this but I would go there, and even tell the nominative Sergeant Majors, and say you need to operate at a strategic level with an operational and tactical focus. And so, the same thing at the Sergeant Majors Academy.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, a little different question here. So, Sergeant Major, coming back to promotions. We talked a little bit about education and the impact that should have -- the way Sergeants Major are selected now with the centralized selection list to serve in Battalion and Brigade level Command Sergeant positions, it's changed over time. I think CSL started in 2008-2009, somewhere in there. In your opinion, how should NCOs be chosen to fill the Battalion and Brigade CSL positions or billets?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah. I think we talked

about that. It's okay, it's getting better. And I think it is going to continue to get better. I think we talked about the process that we had in the past and when it came to discipline, it works. It's not about giving people opportunities, it's about providing unit Commanders soldiers that best prepare NCO leaders. Here's what I tell nominative Sergeant Majors -- Here's what I tell people that are nominative. They say, well, I have been on this list, and I have been there, and I thought [to myself], I have been interviewed and not selected a whole bunch. I have been interviewed and not selected several times. I also know and I would joke -- jokingly I would say with the SMA, I would say hey, the best Sergeant Major doesn't always get selected. I said, hey Dave, look at you. There is a whole bunch of people that are better than you. But you are the right guys for the job right now. And so, the best person doesn't always get picked. But generally-speaking, the right one does.

It's not about who is best, it's about who is the right one for the job. And that's hard for people

to understand and accept. And it all changes. So, I think the process is pretty good. There is nothing that is perfect.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: A lot of it is timing, right?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: A lot of it is timing.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: When does that Commander or General need that Sergeant Major?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah. And so, timing matters. It's same as baseball. You can have the perfect swing, but the pitcher hasn't thrown the ball yet. So, you just call that a practice. And so, in the catcher's world it's a strike.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Like you, a particular Sergeant Major may have the knowledge, skills, and attributes people like to say for this job but [if] that job is unavailable. Somebody else is going to get that job.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah, you may have. Or you might be better than that [person] but that's not what the Commander is looking for.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: In all this, the Commander has a say.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: He should get a say.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, talking about some advice -- I would like to get your advice for the NCO Corps on - you've got a guy or gal who is getting ready to serve in the first Battalion level, Command Sergeant Major position. They are going to take over their first Battalion. What advice you would give him or her, kind of, going in. Just some general stuff and I know you touched on some of - but, repetition is good. Maybe they will catch on to some of these.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah. The first answer is have fun. If you are not having fun, nobody is going to enjoy being around you. Presence matters. Allow subordinates to lead. Establish systems and processes that support the unit. And then, understand your role. Commanders command and Commanders lead. You got to support them and figure out how to be -- and I am talking about, so if you are a Battalion Sergeant Major, the Company Commanders are in command of their companies

and troops. Allow them to lead them and be there to help them. And just find a good place to help them. Be a resource for subordinates. I would say that. And I would say -- and most of the stuff I already talked about.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: This is kind of a general question but, in your experience what must a Command Sergeant Major working for a Commander, be, know, and do, to form a good command team with his or her officer. That relationship.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Well one, I would say -- I think I covered it.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Command team is fairly a new -- it's really not for the Army but, [the term] Command team from my memory hasn't been around that long. It was like, this is officer business; this is NCO business.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Well, you need to know what the Commander's priorities are. And you need to sit down with the Commander and talk about it. So, one of the things, even General Abrams when he came in -

here's his priorities. Here's the priorities. I will line up what I think what my efforts are to support each one of those. And I lined all those things out. And then, I gave it to him. And then, he and I sat down, and we talked about what I was working on, and whether it was in line with what he wanted to do. So, if he wanted me to adjust -- so one is communicating. The other is, you expand the influence on your Commander. You also bring stuff back.

Here's what I will tell you about Commanders in general. General officers and commanders in general, they don't like to be surprised. They don't like to be surprised but they also don't need to know everything. And so, what you got to be able to do as a Command Sergeant Major is go figure out what are those things that you don't want him maybe -- and so, and then the other thing is don't allow yourself to get between your Commander and your Commander's subordinate Commanders. Don't get in between them. It will never come out good. So, that's at any level. And so, don't ask your Commander to choose. They all like to be supportive,

and they don't need to know everything, and it also helps when their subordinate Commanders can come to you to understand what's going on.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: When you say don't -- Sergeant Major, when you say don't get in between them, you mean you don't stop a conversation there. You bring their concerns to the boss or --

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: What I am saying is, when they are not doing something or you don't like what they are doing, don't put yourself in between the Commander and his subordinate commanders. That's just not good business. There is no reason you can't have conversations with the subordinate Commander about certain things. Sometimes you agree, sometimes you won't agree, you understand that you got to be able to be professional. And then, being able to know what to take to your Commander and what not to take to your Commander. So, that's at all levels but especially at the General Officer level, they do not like being surprised.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Sergeant Major,

as your progressed and I know, I think you have said this probably once but -- and it does change a little bit but as a Command Sergeant Major through your different levels -- and I think it's worth repeating, the things that you say didn't change, some of the things just don't change with -- your duties and responsibilities don't necessarily change -- your primary duties, if you don't mind covering that again as you went up from Battalion CSM to Brigade, to Division, to Corps, to IJC, to FORSCOM. Did you see your primary duties pretty much staying the same? Or did they change?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: In general, yeah. Pretty much in general, pretty much stayed the same, focusing on individual and crew training, reception and integration, making sure troopers were taken care of, personnel statuses - I mean, you are doing the same thing as a Platoon Sergeant. You are doing the morning report.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Right.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: And then, that evolves to

being the First Sergeant, and you are doing your monthlies, and then it just continues to -- you understand those systems, and you understand how those systems are failing, and then you understand how to support those below you. So, it's about -- here's what I think it's all about. It all boils down to how do you help your organization be successful? How do you take care of your troopers? How do you enable them to execute their mission? Are they manned, trained, and equipped?

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Not sure if we covered this earlier, we might have. I think we might have a little bit -- your relationship with your subordinates Sergeants Major -- I know we talked about little bit but what are some of things you were able to do to help train or develop and mentor some of your senior Sergeants Major, and some of those were during deployments so not necessarily going to be hands on but what are some of the things you did as a Command Sergeant Major to try to help them mentor and advice your subordinate Sergeants Major?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I wanted to be a sounding board for them. Counseling was important, peer leading -- I mentioned that a few times. But, in a lot of cases, when you are a Sergeant Major you don't have a lot of people to go to. And so, when you have a Sergeant Major that has already done what you have done that you can go to. It also about being open, being accessible. Sergeant Major Hill used to say you have to be three A's: you got to be available, accessible and approachable. Approachable, available and accessible. You got to be all three of those and you got to provide them insight and honest feedback. Some of that comes in -- some of it just discussions and some of it is hey, have you thought of this? Have you tried to -- where are you having challenges? And knowing what questions to ask. And then sometimes, they just need to ride on the pain train.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: We may have talked about it earlier -- you tell them where they actually stand on their performance feedback.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Correct. Sometimes, I

tell you what, I have written more than one counseling statement for nominative Sergeant Majors. And counseling statements for Sergeant Majors at all levels. And I will tell you when you put it on a counseling statement, and I have done that with Sergeant Majors, subordinate Sergeant Majors and a written counseling statement -- I said hey, this one between you and I, it's going in the folder. The next one is going to accompany the one that is in the file, and it's going to go to your rater. And I will have a copy of it but when your NCOER [Non-Commissioned Officer Evaluation Report] comes up, these will be attached when they go to the Commander, for the senior rater comments. What are your questions? It is very powerful. And you don't have to make it personal and they understand it when it's written. That helps. And so, when others know that you are willing to talk to them and help them but also willing to hold them accountable, they will come to you.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: We talked about this a little bit, certain things -- but looking back over your entire career in the military, what are some

of the most memorable or proudest moments, anything you can look back not only as a Sergeant Major, what are some of things you look back and remember, we all them - - those keys moments that --

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I think, being with soldiers in bad places and in bad places when the conditions aren't perfect but being there with them, I take a lot of pride in it. I was able to be with the soldiers, troopers out, when they were out in different places. Yeah.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Next question. And this may not apply but is there any - without going into confidential stuff, but is there anything controversial, a high-profile issue that you had to deal with over your career? That you had to question [yourself] whether I should -- for example, should I engage, should I -- is this my lane, should I do something about this? Or something that maybe you had to do that you didn't necessarily - that was not [to address something] necessarily illegal, immoral or unethical - but I disagree with so much, I've got to do

or say something.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Well, I can't recall any of those. I just hold people accountable for what they need to be held accountable for. I had challenges with lawyers and doctors. General [inaudible] would say 50 percent of all lawyers lose their case and I would come over on top of that with, all doctors have an opinion. So lawyers and doctors -- lawyers have boxed us in, Commanders in, in some cases, by rendering opinions and they build a box to put the commander in.

Oh, another challenge that we have had in the past and I don't know if this question is coming up but the culture, the culture of doing investigations. I probably could have been hemmed up a couple of times. If things would have gone to an investigation -- and sometimes, people get hemmed up when things don't need to go to an investigation, we just ask a few questions. But I tell you, controversial thing was transgender. Transgender was the topic a year or so ago - when we were talking about that and we were talking about hey, what should the policy be and then we had -- I mean it

it's happening in the organizations, and units, and leaders were looking for guidance, and we were providing none. And the Army was asking us to, hey, can you give us some ideas on what you think the guidance we should be giving is?

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: This is when you were at FORSCOM?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah. What guidance should we be giving? So, I asked some people some questions, some senior leaders. I said, how many senior leaders have gotten a panel of transgender troopers together and just sat down and talked to them? And so, I went to one of our installations, and gave a call to one of the Division Sergeant Majors, and I said, hey, I am coming to your post and I want to talk to you about - - I want to talk to some of your transgender troopers. And so, they got five of them together. They didn't even know they had five. They had more than five. And so, I spoke to five, and I said, I want to be in a neutral environment where, it is out of the way, we are not in seen. And I just wanted to talk to those

troopers and say, hey, I don't know what's going to come out of this but I have not had the opportunity. I am just trying to learn from your viewpoint what your expectations are because, FORSCOM and senior leaders are working on providing guidance, and I am not certain I have enough background information to base any judgment and so, I want to talk to you. I talked to those troopers for 90 minutes. They did not want to stop talking.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Yeah. From all different ranks?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: We had two males transitioning to [become] females, two females transitioning to males -- one showed up late, so, I am not sure what exactly the status of that trooper was, and we had a PFC, a Specialist, a Staff Sergeant, a Sergeant and a Captain.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, a good mix of --

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: It was a good mix. And when I left, they stayed in the parking lot and talked

to each other for I don't know how long.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: They were from different units, so --

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah. They were all from different units.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Did that give you some good feedback to send back to the Army?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: We needed perspective. I mean, it's hard to -- I mean, I don't make the decisions, I only gather information and make recommendations. So, it's hard to make a recommendation when you don't have a background.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: You need experience on that.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: So, that was probably -- when you talk about controversial issues, that was one.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, this is kind of for Sergeants Major our there. How did you, in some of the transitions from tactical to operational, to strategic level advisor to different Commanders, how did you handle those transitions -- was it, you just kind of

figured it out or did you have folks along the way that helped prepare you for those leaps, so to speak, up to the strategic level?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: It's no different than being a team leader, and watching your squad leader, and the squad leaders around you. As a Brigade Sergeant Major, you have a Division Sergeant Major and you're watching him - and you have a few of them. So, as a Battalion Sergeant Major and a Brigade Sergeant Major, I had a few Division Sergeant Majors. I could see what they were doing but I didn't have a full knowledge of all the things they were doing but I knew what the Brigades were doing when I went in to be the Division [Command Sergeant Major]. So, you have an idea, but you really don't know --

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: You know what it's like to be below them.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah. So, you can see it and you can imagine it but then some of the things you have to figure out on your own, there is no book on it.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: I think you

already mentioned I -- what prepares you for the FORSCOM level -- nothing. So, talking about mentors. I know you mentioned some names but who were some of your best mentors?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I think the two best were Command Sergeant Major Marvin Hill and Sergeant Major Ron Riling.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: What were some of the kind of things -- how did they help you or some of the examples of -- how they would help you or how would you rely on them for certain things or --?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Well, I had both them. So, one of them was the Division Sergeant Major at the 101st [Airborne Division (Air Assault)] and the other one was 4th ID [Infantry Division] Sergeant Major when we were deployed -- he was the 4th ID Sergeant Major when we were under them and I was 1-75 CAV. And so, he came down and visited. And we had a couple of other things going on. And so, I went up to see him. He came down to visit us. I went up to see him. We ran into each other in our battle space and we developed a

relationship. So, as I continued to move to different positions, I would reach out to them for guidance. Sometimes, I would reach out to both of them, and I would send separate emails, and say, hey, what do you think about this and always asked the other one the same question, and almost every time they came back with the same answer. And I was like, well, that must be a good answer.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: A good answer.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah. So, what I would do -- in some of things -- when I saw my first Legion of Merit or -- then I said, well, I have never seen one of these before. Hey, what's the criteria and how do you measure, who and what? Yeah. So, the first time I am making a recommendation [for the award], I am looking at one and I am going, hey, what are the things you took into consideration and both of them said almost exactly the same thing back to me. Oh, must be good.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: What did they say - [it was an appropriate award] for retirement?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: The things that they said

coming back were retirement for a Command Sergeant Major, Battalion or Brigade or Garrison; PCS of [award for] your best Brigade CSM, and retirement of [award for] your best like --that is the guy -- your best Operations Sergeant Major.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Unfortunately, in my experience -- I used to be a G3 Sergeant Major, and I saw and participated in every monthly retirement ceremony, and I never saw NCOs get that [award]. But I am sure there were some deserving folks but never got it.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Or, they had their own ceremony?

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Not this place [at that installation. That wasn't an option, at least back then.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Okay.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: But that's good that some NCOs were getting recognized. So talking to -- and I know, you have actually done this -- so if you had the opportunity to go back and talk to Nominative

Sergeants Major or guys that are just going to their first position, kind of, like the guys that are going through the Nominative Leader Course. If you were able to talk to them for an hour or a couple of hours about their future role, now at the Strategic-level, what would be some of topics and themes that you would -- and I think you mentioned some of these tonight but in that particular scenario when these guys just going in -- and we talked about Battalion-level. So, now you got guys and gals that are preparing for their first position working for an Officer, I mean, for a General, I'm sorry. Anything specific that you would like to tell them before they get into their position, if that's possible?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Focus on operational type, have an operational type of focus, understand your role, and the role of your organization. Understand your organization's role, and know what they do, and what they contribute, and how they contribute. Learn the staff. Figure out what meetings you should attend. Inform staff of what your

efforts are and what you are trying to achieve. A couple other things, I said, chose your personal staff carefully, be patient, I talked about the Generals, they don't like being surprised, don't get in (inaudible). And I would also say, you may have multiple Commanders, while you are a Nominative Sergeant Major -- I had several over time -- you have to be able to adjust because they Commander won't. So, Commanders will come in and they will be totally different from each other. And so, you got to be able to be the complementary effort.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: It helps if you know your role.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: You have to know your role. And I would also say communication is hugely important and I would say at FORSCOM level, after the first couple months, especially if you are in a position where travel is required, you got to figure out your diet, and your PT plan because you can make excuses not to do it but you need to demand that you have time to do PT, and do your PT, and you have to be

able to eat properly. Otherwise, you'll get behind and it's hard to catch up.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: This next question is kind of an overall -- I think you had [served for] what -- 34 years?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: 34 and a little bit so.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Over that time, I am sure the Army has changed a lot from the time when you and I came in. We had a lot of a Vietnam vets in the Army, our senior leaders, and -- we talked about kind of on the education side or training side. So, what are some significant changes, big picture stuff that has happened in the Army over your career, and in your opinion that they made some of those significant changes that we have gone through? Has it made the Army better at anything, or worse, or a little bit of both?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I think the biggest positive thing that has happened in my career, one of the biggest positive things is the BCT [Brigade Combat Team] concept - I think -- I think that really brought

the Army together -- all the career fields, bringing everybody together instead of just coming together for a little bit, then go away [train together for a deployment; then dispersing after the deployment]. That was huge, forced me to learn logistics, forced me to be exposed to the different career fields, and understand what those organizations were doing as maneuver, and how they supported maneuver. Also, it helped them understand maneuver, and what is important to maneuver so that they can understand and support maneuver. I think it was the integration of the units into combat arms formations, and now, in the combat arms, the MOSs is huge. That, in itself; it is huge.

When I was a Staff Sergeant in the 82nd [Airborne Division] so, this was not that long ago. This was in 1987-88, '89, there was a strip club on post, across the street from my barracks.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: On the installation?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: On the installation. We had strippers in the Officers' club. I never went to

the Officer's Club, but I heard stories. But we had a strip club on post. And now, we have women that have been to Ranger school.

And so, I would go to the Senior Leader Course as a FORSCOM Sergeant Major, and when we are talking about all this, and I would ask 200 Staff Sergeants and Sergeants First-Class, at the Senior Leader Course, Maneuver Senior Leader Course, and say, it's okay to have an opinion in here. It's okay. How many of you are concerned to have females in your organization? In your Platoons? And there would be a large number that put their hands up. I would say, okay, that's fine. And I would ask them, if you had a female that came to your unit, that was technically and tactically capable, and physically fit, more physically fit than 30 percent of your unit, would your Platoon be better if she was there? And they all said, yes. And then I said, if you had that same trooper when you were on a release foot march, or a run, and she was getting ready to pass you, would you run harder? And they all said, yes. Then I said, so, not only is your Platoon

better, but now you are personally better for having that trooper there.

But when I would talk about this in settings where it was mixed gender, I would talk to the female troopers and tell them, hey, don't fool yourself. The average female will never be able to keep up physically with the average male. So, don't be average. You have got to be better than average. And that's really where we want to go with the Army because we did not have a standard for combat arms fitness. And now we are working to that. We did not have that standard. We didn't say, now, to come in the Army, we have that physical demands tests.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: I remember hearing about that.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I would love --

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: I think it was in 13 Bravo [Field Artillery School] or something where the majority of the guys couldn't meet the standards they came up with.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: That's right. And so,

our Army has got better because of this. I believe this [the opening of all MOSs/Jobs for female soldiers that meet the standards for those MOSs/Jobs] is one of those single things that will come out that will make our Army better.

I would say, what's made us worse is our record-keeping. We can keep so much data and we have ability to keep so many records in UCMJ [Uniformed Code of Military Justice]. I am not a big -- we need UCMJ and we need to be able to -- and sometimes, we have Brigade Commanders finding out about misconduct before the squad leader does. Our ability to communicate is so fast -- and we also have the culture of investigation.

And so, quick story. So, I am a Squadron Sergeant Major in Iraq, and the interpreter manager told this interpreter that she was getting ready to -- she had to go the next day on a patrol with me. So, we woke her up the next morning to get her ready to go on patrol. And she said, I don't want to go with the Sergeant Major. I said, why not? I don't want to go with the Sergeant Major. And he said, well, did he do

something to you? Yes. Did he say something to you that made you feel uncomfortable? Yes. What was it? I can't tell you. So, now, they are getting ready to start an investigation. And I said, hey, stop. I want the interpreter NCO, bring that interpreter, I want the -- we had the XO come up, we had the Company Commander who oversaw from HHC [Headquarters and Headquarters Company] who oversaw her -- these guys, said, hey, all of you in the conference room right now. And so, I asked the interpreter, I said, hey, why is it that you told this Sergeant that you didn't want to go on a patrol with me? Well, every time I go out with you, you make me wear my helmet, I am not allowed to smoke, and I have to run to keep up with you. You treat me like a soldier. I said, thank you very much. Go. Go take a smoke break. I said, that is the greatest compliment I could have ever gotten that I treated a female Iraqi interpreter like a soldier. I expected her to wear her gear. I didn't let her smoke. She had to keep up. You got to keep up. This is your job where -- So, we put ourselves in position --with a culture of investigations

where we can't just come in and try to resolve things, and say hey, what the heck is going on? We have to have an investigation to figure it out. And not all the times, investigations are timely. They are not timely. And they are not accurate and they become -- in some cases, instead of being a primary deal like they are supposed to be, it's just an additional inconvenience for the investigating officer. And really what lays in the balance is somebody's career and well-being. And we could fix a whole bunch of that stuff by intervening quickly. So, I think our culture of investigation has gotten a little bit out of control.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, looking to the future. In the Army, we have challenges as we go along. They don't ever go away but there are different challenge at different times. Looking at what's going on now and your experience over the past 34 years, what do you see some of the Army's major challenges being in the next 15-20, 30 years?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I think the Army being separated from society. We don't want to be separated

from society but we have, in many cases, separated ourselves from the society, and the nation, and the citizens that we serve. So, we got -- we have to work on making sure that we are not separated from our society. I am concerned for the pool of qualified recruits. We've got to be able to continue to recruit America's men and women to serve in the United States Armed Forces. And then, I think, we need to be able to manage or balance our reliance on technology versus the importance of delivering training to soldiers on the objective.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So not relying so much on equipment?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: We got to balance it. So, we have to balance that because technology -- everybody wants to put cameras up. A camera is no good unless you have a soldier on the other end with a weapon system. You can -- you have seen the commercial on TV. I am not a security guard, I'm a security monitor?

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: That's right.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I am telling you some bad

stuff is going to get ready to happen. I see a picture, we need people. We need trained troopers -- trained and disciplined troopers to respond.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Is that a concern that we won't be able to do that? Or, do you think that we just need to make sure that --

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: We have to make sure that we balance. It has to be balanced because we allowed it to be out of balance, I mean, the system did.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: The next question is -- again this is kind of for the NCO Corps here. Command Sergeant Major. That title, that position has been around since what 1967-68. In your experience, do you think the officer corps, as a whole, understands what a Command Sergeant Major's job or responsibilities are?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I don't think they know what they daggone --. They can't articulate what they want a Sergeant to do.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: And why do you think that is?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Because we don't define it very well for them. I think sometimes we have a hard time articulating what we really want our Non-Commissioned Officers to do, and what they are charged to do and Army Regulation 600-20. And we don't do a very good at job defining that in any of our doctrine. What's the role of a Non-Commissioned Officer, and what do you want him to do in your organization. So, I think, we have a general idea but we don't define that. We don't want to box people in but we also want to get them on the right azimuth [point them in the right direction]. But I believe that Commanders have an idea of what they want their Sergeant Major to be but they don't know where that's written.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: What are some ways you think -- how could we correct this? Should it go into the officers' training or where do we need to start? What would be some of your suggestions on things -- how we leverage it?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I think a lot of it is how we leverage it. This is something that we put

together just to define what we want NCOs to do at each level as it applies to man, train and equip. I think counseling would help. So, having a document, a couple of documents. Army Regulation[AR] 600-20 kind of outlines it pretty well. But then through each grade -- what do you want your NCOs to do at each grade, and in different organizations what do you want them to do. So, outline that and then, I think, counseling. Sit down and do counselling. We don't do that as well as we should.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: We are the only -
- well, I won't say the only service because the Navy has something similar to Command Sergeant Major -- they have Command Master Chiefs. And there is -- not everybody, but we talked about it earlier, make sure you know what your role is, and I am sure you have experienced Command Sergeants Major, your peers or not -
- did some things or thought they were the Commander in some of things that they actually tried to do. Do you think that, maybe it's an opinion but, there is -- I have run into Commanders that say that we don't need

such thing as a Command Sergeant Major, I just need a Sergeant Major. They see that -- some people see that title as maybe giving some people the idea that they are in charge. That title. I'm a Command Sergeant Major, how do you see that? Do you see that as an issue? I mean, the Marine Corps has just Sergeants Major.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I know they do, but they are also not the subject matter expert in that organization. The Gunnery Sergeant is the subject matter expert in that organization. So, I learned that when I was the IJC Sergeant Major and I go to a place and see a First Sergeant. The First Sergeant had zero clue about what the technical and tactical plan was and how they were operating. And so -- because the First Sergeant was not responsible for any of that, that was the Gunnery Sergeant, and I think that was something intended, and that works for the Marine Corps and their structure.

I think the Navy and the Air Force are not decentralized and the Army is decentralized. Call it what you will, the role shouldn't change. You can call

it whatever you want to.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Right.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I don't think it matters.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Okay. So, now we are switching to now, pretty much. So, your retired earlier or you started your retirement earlier this year, just retired here this month; officially.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: What led to your decision?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: There wasn't really much else for me to do. I possibly could have competed for a COCOM [Combatant Command position] but I liked my role as the FORSCOM Sergeant Major. I can't think of any other job at that level that I would be where I would have any more influence and it was just -- the timing was right professionally, the timing was right personally.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Sergeant Major, looking back at your career, what are some of the things that you see as your most significant accomplishment? Personal accomplishments and I am sure like we all have,

there is probably some things that you set out to do but you didn't get to do. So, if you don't mind talking about that just -- what you see as your most significant contribution maybe to the [NCO] Corps or to the Army, and what are somethings you wish you could have accomplished?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I think my biggest accomplishment and I talked about that before, was hopefully I've left a legacy, and the legacy lives on in the soldiers that I have worked with and influenced, and see them come up through the ranks, and that will live on for a long time. And I would say I did that and I did that with -- the other thing I am proud of is my kids had -- one of my sons, my oldest son, gave me a compliment. He had joined the Army right before I was a Division Sergeant Major, and he had joined the Army, and he said -- so you were in the Army but when you came home, you never brought home anything from work. So, that was pretty large, and then I had my youngest son join the Army, and I was a FORSCOM Sergeant Major, and none of them had any clue of what that was. And so, I

was able to not bring work home. They knew I was a Sergeant Major but they didn't know exactly what I did, or how that applied or, I was pretty proud of that. And hopefully -- I am very proud of the troopers that I have seen continue to progress in the Army.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, now you've officially transitioned to civilian life. What have been some of the greatest challenges over the last year or so in preparing for and actually going through the transition from your military career now to your post-military career?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I would like to say I had some [challenges] but really, I think, retirement was much more ready for me -- it was looking for me to move faster than I was -- so, I had a date, I was good with it, and I was ready to pace myself. But I was planning far enough out where we found a house and I wasn't ready to buy a house until July. But the house we found, we found in April, and they wanted to sell it [to us] then. So, that was fast. I wasn't in a hurry to look for a job but somebody called me, and offered a job to me, and

I wasn't ready. But they were willing to wait. And so, it was a job that I didn't want to turn down so, they waited for me. So, everything was ready for me before I was ready for it.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: I hope the Army trained you for that.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: I was ready to get out. That's kind of how that worked.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, speaking of that. So, the next question is what have you done since your retired? So, you were offered a job, so what are planning -- what are your short-term plans?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: So, my short-term plan is I am working for non-profit that focuses on veterans, and first responders and prevention of suicide, and we focus on PTS [Post Traumatic Stress] and TBI [Traumatic Brain Injury], and we focus on physical and emotional rehabilitation, and we use cycling to do that. And so, it's called Project Hero formerly known as Ride to Recovery. And so, we have a community-based health program. In the past, when it was Ride to Recovery, we

would take wounded troopers on cycling trips, and we found that there was therapeutic outcomes -- peer-to-peer counseling, shared experiences --.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, this is nation-wide?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: It is nation-wide. We have a hub at Walter Reed [National Medical Center, MD].

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Okay.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Since 2008, every soldier that has gone through the cycling program at Walter Reed has been through a Project Hero Soldier. Same thing down at BAMC [Brooke Army Medical Center, TX]. And these things stood up in the WTBs [Warrior Transition Battalions]. So, now the WTBs have stood up their adapted sports program. They don't really need those hubs there but we also have hubs in different areas across the nation. So, currently we have 52 of those, and I am the Hub -- I am the National Director of our Hub Program. We are partnered with the Veterans Administration and the National Guard now. So, we are working on these things. But we also put rides on. So,

we do five rides that are a week long. We rode 500 miles on down the California coast in October. We rode from Minneapolis to Chicago back in August.

We do two women's initiative a year for a week. Women come together. It's for women, by women who are victims of -- for women who have been victims of emotional or physical abuse. And so, we have two of those programs a year. And so, we can't take care of everybody in those programs, and so we have these community-based programs, so they stay together and stay connected with each other.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, your region is this region of the country?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: My region is the United States of America.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: The United States. Okay. Any long-term plans for you and the family?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: One of the things I would like to do is, I would like to write a book. And so, I would like to do that and try and like to get that done

in the next five years.

Other than that, I have this job now, and I am having fun and I would like to think I'm making a difference. And my family, not my immediate family but my extended family, would say hey, you have been in the Army more than 20 years, you can retire, when are you going to retire? I would say, well, I am going to retire when I stop having fun, when I don't think I am having a positive impact. And that's how I have measured myself and, I think, in 34 years, I have had a great time and I have made a positive impact, I believe. So, I am going to do that. I think I am measuring myself against that with this job and I will keep on doing this while I am having fun. Anytime you can ride your bike with 190 veterans for 500 miles in a week, that's fun.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: So, Sergeant Major, last question. Is there anything else you had like to discuss -- something we haven't addressed and that you had like to talk about?

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Yeah. What I had like to

say lastly is, we can't underestimate the importance of family, and family is huge. And I feel very fortunate that I selected wisely. And I have been married for 26 years now, and I don't think that people understand what families sacrifice when they are married to a soldier. So, I tell people my wife has been my northern star and my southern cross for me. Three things we need. Life's like land nav [navigation], right? We need three things to be successful in land nav. You got to have patience, experience, and trust.

And so, my wife's been my north star but my kids, I really didn't understand the things that they sacrificed. They went to Fort Campbell High School for lots of deployments. And when you look at the service stripes on our sleeves -- the combat service stripes. And lot of, I say, soldiers look at those as points of pride, and they are proud of those things but I also look at those things as scars on the family. Some scars heal back and they heal back stronger. Some never heal.

And I feel very fortunate that my kids, those scars have healed relatively stronger than they have

been exposed to a lot in my absence. And they have sacrificed a lot but they have also seen the sacrifice of their friends' parents where they've had counselors or people coming into their classroom and take their friends out to go give them the casualty notification. And then they have grown to be able to see their friends from school who were upper classmen join the military and become casualties themselves.

And so, I don't think when people say thanks, thanking families for their sacrifice, they truly understand some of the sacrifices that they make but I would like to say that, I would not have progressed like I did, my wife and my family kept me grounded through all of this.

And the last thing I would like to say is really the Army owes me nothing. I owe the Army an incredible debt by having the opportunity to serve our country and serve with great Soldiers.

SERGEANT MAJOR WATERHOUSE: Sergeant Major, I would like to thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to do this interview. These questions, these

answers, your feedback will be great for the Non-
Commissioned Officer Corps, past, future, and present.

CSM (R) SCHROEDER: Oh, thank you very much.

* * * * *

CERTIFICATE OF NOTARY PUBLIC

I, Carleton J. Anderson, III do hereby certify that the forgoing electronic file when originally transmitted was reduced to text at my direction; that said transcript is a true record of the proceedings therein referenced; that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which these proceedings were taken; and, furthermore, that I am neither a relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the parties hereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of this action.

Carleton J. Anderson, III

(Signature and Seal on File)

Notary Public in and for the Commonwealth of
Virginia

Commission No. 351998

Expires: November 30, 2020

ANDERSON COURT REPORTING
706 Duke Street, Suite 100
Alexandria, VA 22314
Phone (703) 519-7180 Fax (703) 519-7190